

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK I.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE DEAN'S PARTY.

WHEN the result of the trial was known, there was a marked reaction in favour of the plaintiff. The little public of the place did not care to consider Serjeant Ryder's "bill of exceptions," or the "points" he had saved, but only looked to the substantial fact of the verdict. It took every one by surprise; and every one was now lost in admiration of the spirit, energy, "pluck," and "gameness" with which young Ross had held on to his purpose, in spite of all advice and obstacles—even the great Doctor Topham, who had always shown an angry contempt for him, and said openly, "The fellow had neither wit, brains, nor sense!"

Later, Mr. Tilney came to his friend with somewhat more hopeful views of human nature. "Here's that dean—Ridley, you know, Lord Rooksby's brother—has sent us this for to-morrow night. You are to come. Mrs. Ridley saw you last Sunday at the sermon, and asked who you were."

"I never care," said Mr. Tillotson—"I never go to parties. I fear I shall be going away."

"Nonsense. I am very glad of this," said Mr. Tilney; "it will amuse us. They do the thing very well at that house, I can tell you. I hear the Secretary is coming down to them to-night, and I suppose they want to make what they can of him. The poor Dook had a kind of seafaring chaplain—Bowdler—that could swear now and again, saving your presence. I could tell you something about him, uncommon good too, but the mistress is waiting. They are all to go. We'll make a little party of it, and go together. Do, now. We do these sort of things, you see, better here; and," he added, confidentially, "that is why I would sooner live here in plain St. Alans than in all your racketing London rout. That did very well, Tillotson, fifty years ago, but I want a little breathing time between this and the little vault over there." This he delivered sonorously, like the close of a chant.

The dean, who had preached for the Mariners on the Sunday, was indeed brother to Lord Rooksby; and though the mere knowledge of

the relationship fetched the price it ought to do in this provincial market, still it was felt that by the occasional exhibition of the noble relative, much greater profit might have been turned out of this little capital. For a time there is an awe and reverence among the rustics, from the expectation that the noble ghost may walk at any hour. But soon a feeling of security, and then utter incredulity, arrives. This was the tone of the public mind as to Dean Ridley's noble brother.

The deanery was an old house, with an enormous roof, like one of the steep stands the dean himself read from in the cathedral, with two tall chimneys at each side, also very like the lights at the side of the stand. It stood by itself in a garden, and had tall lanky windows, with many little panes in each; altogether, with a rusted ancient French château air over it, and with the kind of dim reference to the cathedral an old retainer has to an old family.

The Very Rev. Lord Rooksby's brother had, however, put it in thorough repair when his noble brother's interest had brought him the deanery (of course charging his predecessor's executors with dilapidation, and his own successors with restorations), and out of his own resources had fitted up the house very handsomely. Mrs. Dean and the Miss Deans having got down Lord Rooksby for a day or two, had determined to "cash," discount, mortgage, and exhibit that noble person in every possible way that profit could be made, or a penny of social pride "turned" on him.

The dean himself was a mild and amiable man, but whose life was literally a burden to him, from the joint terrorism exercised by Mrs. Ridley and Doctor Topham. With Mrs. Ridley singly he might have dealt; against Doctor Topham and his rude tyranny, his connexion with the Treasury, and his secret influence with the bishop, he might have made some stand; but the cabals of the place, and the confusion brought by Doctor Topham's dislikes and despotism, his proclaimed purpose to get this man and that man "out," harassed and worried him beyond belief.

He had been taught by Mrs. Ridley to like good society, and he would have liked it, had he been allowed; for on visits at "good houses" he found some peace and quiet, after the distractions of his own. And now, Mrs. Ridley having

got down the Lord Rooksby, and learning, moreover, from her friend and accomplice, Doctor Topham, that the famous "Right Honourable Frederick Topham" could spare twenty-four hours from the Treasury, and was flying down to his brother on some family business, for that time only, thought it would be a splendid idea to exhibit these two luminaries in combination, and concerted measures for that purpose with Doctor Topham. That despot also thought it would be a good idea, and entered into it, agreeing to let out his distinguished relative for that night. And very soon it became known that there was to be a great dinner-party at the deanery, with a faint rumour, to which, in some bosoms, hope was father, that the crowd might be admitted in "the evening" to a railed-off place, whence they might gaze their fill at the splendid strangers. At first no details of any authentic value could be got at, but soon the idle vapours took shape and consistency, and it became known for a certainty—the earliest news was had from the pastrycook, who had received instructions, the significance of which there was no mistaking—that the two strangers would be "shown" together, first at a dinner, then in a more promiscuous way, when the doors would be opened to a mixed crowd. Then came the heart-burnings and almost misery; for as to being admitted directly into the more heavenly mansions of the dining-room, they were not so infatuated as to dream of that; but even for that privilege of being allowed to stand afar off, and contemplate the beatific vision, there would be eager competition.

From afar off, across the common, the long lanky windows could be seen lighted up. The festival was known, and the selection of guests caused bitter heart-burnings. Asking every stall in the cathedral, *that* was absurd; and when it was considered that every stall held a wife and large family, the thing became more absurd still. Some of the excluded came privily, and skulked about the common to watch the festivities they could not share in.

The dean's noble brother, Lord Rooksby, stood behind; not in any reserved place, with a railing round him, or in an exhibitor's case—but simply as any other man in the room. He was very tall, had grey hair, and a dried yellow face, which he kept very high, and well thrown back, and was explaining quietly to the archdeacon and Doctor Topham, who had dined, "what now the Church really wanted." As the Tilney party entered in a long file, the whole room, with its lamps, seemed in a state of rest and happiness, reposing after the state dinner, and content with the beatific vision of the nobleman who had "come among them."

There was to be music. Mrs. Ridley had ordered some of the choir serfs to attend. These gathered behind the piano, and herded together for mutual protection, waiting until they should be wanted. They were caged until their voices were set free and allowed to spring. Mr. Hart

was there, the dreadful bass, the Polypheme of the choir, with a beard and whiskers like a deep black cactus, suggesting an awful idea of vocal strength. There was also Mr. Yoke], the counter-tenor, and Doctor Fugle, the seraphic tenor, but now without his seraphim's robe, and looking anything but spiritual. In his stall, with the robe on, with an indistinct hint as of wings folded up behind, he was, so to speak, carried off. But here, behind the piano, he was revealed as a rather coarse, oily-checked, large-whiskered, and very earthy being.

The Tilney girls sat down, a little desponding from this gloomy state of things; for the horizon being darkened with great black ecclesiastical firs and cypresses, did not promise much. They sat round and waited. Mr. Tilney, who had an aptitude for "getting on," now recollected his old arts, got into his old social armour, and had presently secured Lord Rooksby by an allusion to a fellow-equerrier whom his lordship had also known. Minor canons looked on from afar at this wonderful instance of the power of knowledge.

Both the great lights were present, who divided popular admiration. The public might regard the dean's brother, of whom they had heard so much, with curiosity; but they looked with awe, and a yet greater interest, on that Doctor Topham, that very Czar of the little place, who was known to rule the men and women, the high and low, and almost dispose of their persons and chattels with a despotism that was frightful. And there beside him was the Right Honourable Frederick, a spare gentleman, with a stearine face, in a little group of his own, explaining something with extraordinary fluency and volubility. The crowd looked on with wonder at these two little groups, and saw with mysterious awe Doctor Topham pass from one to the other indifferently, and assert his rude roughshod supremacy over the Lord Rooksby himself, by noisily, and with angry language, telling him the "wretched state" of things here, and that the whole chapter wanted a sound "purging."

Presently Doctor Fugle, and some half-dozen of the pariahs confined behind the piano, fell into line without leaving their prison, and began some "part singing."

Under cover of this entertainment, which seemed the signal for easy and fluent conversation, Mr. Tillotson drew near to Miss Millwood, before whom a youthful and bashful vicar-choral was standing up and talking. The golden hair gleamed under the lights. There was a soft melancholy in her face. She heard the vicar-choral, but with a degree of attention that could not have been very flattering to that gentleman, who unjustly set down her distraction to quite another reason. "That old Tilney," he told a brother choralist, going home, "introduced her to the lord, and it quite upset her." But the lord, to Mr. Tilney's great pride, had asked him who was that "remarkable-looking young woman over there, who had really quite an air

about her?" And he had brought the lord to her. The Miss Tilneys had seen the introduction, and moved with indignation in their chairs. It seemed like the wicked elder sisters, indignant at Cinderella being sent for to the palace.

It was when the lord had bestowed the attention which he thought sufficient on such occasions, that the choir gentlemen began their minstrelsy. It was part singing, for which these artists were deservedly famed. "Ah! why, my love, she sighs for me!" by Wagner, in very close harmonies, and in which Doctor Fugle's tenor, coming out of a little hole at the corner of his mouth, produced a great effect. He sang as if he were in his stall, and with his eyes fixed on the little rosette of the gaselier, just as they used to be on the groining of the cathedral. The voices were considered to come out finely, especially with the rough and powerful "street pavement" voice of Mr. Rogers; especially, too, where they all came in together with an up and down languishing, and increasing stress and vigour: "My—love is—see-eye-ing—is see-eye-ing—is sighing all for-r-r-r," in a note prolonged before the final descent, "ME!" That ME rolled away, in fluttering waves, into silence.

CHAPTER XIX. DARKNESS AGAIN.

MR. TILLOTSON had gone over to Ada Millwood. She had beckoned to him. "I wanted to speak to you," she said. "He is gone away. It is the best thing for him, and for us all. But forgive me if I ask you—but that night I saw him—at least I am sure it was he—go up to you on the green. How much you have suffered from him, and so kindly borne with for him, I can guess. And I do fear that night——"

"No, no," said he; "I understand him perfectly. I *did* make some allowance for him hitherto, but I begin to see that he has some incurable dislike to me. I have not the art of pleasing people. But he is gone, and, I suppose, will not come back."

"I suppose will not come back!" she repeated, a little absently. "He talked of changing into some other regiment. I suppose it will be all for the best."

"If he had even the tact to know those who are inclined to befriend him," said Mr. Tillotson, warmly.

"And so *you* are going away too," she said, suddenly. "Going in the morning?"

"Yes," he said, "going back to the solitude of the world. I am very glad of this opportunity, for I wished to speak to you before I went. Indeed, I should hardly have come here but for such a hope. There! They are beginning another of their glees. I have seen a great deal of your family life," he went on, hastily. "I know you will forgive me what I am going to say, but *you* will give me credit for wishing to show that I would like to serve you. You have all been so kind to me, and I begin now to feel very desolate when left to myself. I could not

help seeing many things in your house which I must have shut my eyes not to have seen."

Her eyes dropped upon the ground, and she did not answer.

"Again I ask you to forgive what I am going to say. The way of life in which I live quickens our observation. I have guessed a great deal more than I have seen—guessed that you—forgive me, I say again—were not so happy in that house as you deserve to be, Miss Millwood—and that though the family, I suppose, is affectionate, their hopes, and wishes, and aims of life are so different, that——"

"But why should you think this?" she answered, gently, and as if wishing him to go on; "no one has surely told you?"

"Told me," he said, "no. But I have an instinct that we—that you and I—have suffered much the same. I fancy I have no one to understand me; that even in a crowd I am alone. That everything in life for me is cold, cheerless. From the moment I entered your house, from the moment, too, that *you* entered the room, on that first night, something seemed to tell me that your life was like mine. Forgive me this absurdity, I say again."

"Mr. Tillotson," she said, softly, "I do, indeed, know you, and believe you. Perhaps I have had some little sorrows of my own. Not, however, to compare with yours."

"Little sorrows," said he; "no, no. Then they are for the world. They do not understand you. They never will, and I do not blame them. They cannot be what they have not power to be. But," said he, more earnestly, "it is different for you. It will grow worse, as time goes on. Every day it will become worse; the isolation and desolation will become unendurable. You feel it—you must feel it every day."

"Yes," she said quietly, without lifting her eyes.

"I know," he went on. "I have had dismal experience myself. For years I have scarcely known life properly. Within this week or so I have begun to feel life, the air, the warmth of the sun." He said this with no melodramatic stress or attitude; but calmly, as he said everything else. She could not suspect that there was any secret meaning in it.

(The labouring men were now drawing a heavy vocal roller over a rude macadamised road, and by desire of Lord Rooksby were repeating the song. They were hard at "My love is see-eye-ing;" then, on a story higher, "my love is see-eye-ing—is sighing for-r-r—ME!") Neither Mr. Tillotson nor his companion heard these vocal labouring men.)

He went on: "What would I propose, what would I advise? you will ask. Recollect, I am going away, and have the privilege of a man on the scaffold. I seem to see one chance before me. It may prove to be a delusion—a will-o'-the-wisp—like everything else in life; but if I dared to speak plainly?"

She looked up hurriedly. "What *can* you

advise? There is nothing that you could know, or could say, unless——"

"It may be no remedy after all," he went on, quickly, "but it might. You have been kind to me, oh, so kind! I have felt that you sympathised with me. More I could not hope for. But perhaps in time—perhaps compassion for one who has been so miserable and hopeless——"

She looked at him. "Oh, Mr. Tillotson," she said, in alarm, "what do you wish me to say?"

"If I were any one else," he went on, sadly, "or belonged more to the ways of the world, I might hide what I am going to say behind all manner of delicate hints. But it is better to speak plainly, is it not?"

"No, no, no," she said, hastily. "Dear Mr. Tillotson, I implore you—no. Don't speak about *that*. Oh, why did you? This so grieves me!"

He started, almost rose, with a kind of half groan. "Have I made one more mistake?" he said, sadly. "Ah, I can see I have. I was going to ask you to leave this place for good—to come and begin a new, and what I believe would be a happier, life. I have money and influence; these, too, would help to make you happy; and, as far as the completest devotion——" he looked in her face, and paused. "Ah, but I see—one more mistake."

"Dear Mr. Tillotson," she said, almost passionately, "how *can* I thank you. But it is impossible. There are reasons! Oh, never, never, never!"

"Well, I might have guessed this," he said, sadly. "It is the old fortune. It was the only chance left to me. It may go with the rest. Ah! there is the music beginning again."

It was the grinders at work once more. Doctor Fugle and his oarsmen labouring through another glee—to oblige the company.

"Oh, what will you think of me?" she said, eagerly. "I don't know what to say. You will despise me because I know you will think I led you on to this. But I did not mean it to do so. Indeed no! Tell me that you do not think so."

"To be sure! I thought," said he hopelessly, "that from the beginning you seemed to treat me with interest and kindness, and I stupidly mistook that kindness. I have made a hundred such blunders in my life. No, it was all my fault."

"Yes, I *did* feel an interest," she said, with some hesitation, "and I admired and pitied. I saw that you were alone, and——"

"To be sure," he said. "I understand. But I thought, as there was no one else you cared for—and though for a moment I thought that that rude rough man who has left us had some influence, still, what you had told me settled *that*—and——"

"Yes, yes," she said, hastily. "It was not that. No, no. There are far different reasons."

Mr. Tilney here came up with an air of mystery. "Tillotson," he said, "a word. What fine music that is. Fugle is next door but one to divine, ain't he? Whenever I hear that man he

quite lifts me up. Oh, I say! A letter to-night from that scapegrace."

"From Mr. Ross?" said the other.

"Not at all so bad a creature as you would fancy. Good at bottom. I tell Mrs. Tilney this will all wear off in time. My dear sir, Bushell, the best counsel in England, tells us that the decision is all wrong in law—must go overboard, sir—he is sure of reversing it, and, not only that, but certain of winning in the end. With all his faults, he has a pure game spirit. I like him for it—I do! Not only that, but he has wormed out an old lady who is to furnish him with the pieces to carry on the war. Wonderful his tact. I wish I had had his spirit when I was his age!"

"So, then," said Mr. Tillotson, calmly, "we may consider his prospects restored?"

"As good as restored. Even if he loses, he don't know what the old lady may do for him. Wonderful, wonderful," he added, devoutly, "are the ways of the Providence overhead!"

"Yes," said Mr. Tillotson, absently, and looking over at the golden-haired Miss Millwood.

In another half-hour the Tilney party were walking home. As they were getting their "things," Mr. Tillotson heard some one whisper him, "Oh, once more forgive me!"

He almost smiled. "You might have told me everything," he said; "but no matter now."

"I had nothing to tell," she said; "but I am going to ask you for something more. You will not mention to Mr. Tilney what you have said to-night. I have a reason."

"That also I can understand perfectly," he said, bitterly.

"But I fear you do *not* understand me," she said, passionately and loudly, so that the maid, who was getting her cloak, stared.

They walked home slowly. "So sorry that you are going," Mrs. Tilney said, with what anybody, who did not know her well, would have supposed a smile of delight. "Shall quite miss you, Mr. Tillotson. Now you must promise us to come very soon again. Augusta here says she feels *improved* by knowing you. Good-bye, then. Good-bye, Mr. Tillotson."

They were at the gate of their house, among the luxuriant hedges and flowers which almost hid it. Augusta, who knew the keys of the human voice far better than she did those of regular music, threw some pathos into her voice. At this moment she felt some penitence for opportunities neglected, and wished that she had renounced the military works and pomps for the more substantial blessings whose superior advantages she now saw.

The third girl stood behind them all, half up the walk leading to the house. Where the sisters were prominent, it was understood and expected that she should keep retired. The moon was out. As a background there was the old house, overgrown with great cushions of leaves, with lights in its small windows, and looking like a scene. The moonlight, too, fell upon her pale face, and lit her up like a tinted statue.

"Your kindness I shall not forget," he said to Mr. Tilney. "I must say good-bye to them." And he passed them and went up the walk.

"Good-bye," he said, hastily. "Depend on my secrecy, as indeed you might suppose. Men do not publish their own mortifications."

"Forgive me!" she said again, very piteously. "Oh, forgive me! I have not told you everything. I dare not."

"Ah! *That* does not mend it much," he said, with deep grief and suffering. "It comes to the same thing. Unless," he added, nervously, "it means that after some time—years even—"

She shook her head. "No, no," she said, "I may not even say *that*. What *can* I do?"

Mr. Tillotson looked down sadly. "Then so be it. Promise me this, at least," he said "if ever you should want aid or assistance of any kind for yourself or for *them*, send for me. Will you promise me *that*, at least?"

The others had now reached him. "Good-bye again," they said; and passed into the house.

"I will, I will," she said, eagerly.

"A solemn pledge, I mean," he said, hurriedly, "not to be lightly spoken. Let me look to some little relation to you in the future. It will be a little gleam of light before me. Oh, what infatuation! For these few weeks I actually thought the sun was coming and the sunny days, and that the clouds were all behind. Only one more delusion," he added, with a smile, "to put to the rest! Well, you promise?"

(Mrs. Tilney's voice was heard calling shrilly, "Ada!")

"I do, I do promise," she answered. "Indeed I do! Don't think ill of me, but be indulgent. I cannot tell you everything. There, dear Mr. Tillotson, good-bye, God bless you, and make you happy."

She seemed to fade out. He saw her pass into the illuminated doorway, where the light was shed on her golden hair for the last time. Even then, and at that distance, he saw a sweet, grieved, and most wistful look turned to the darkness where he had been left. Then she was gone.

Mr. Tilney's loud voice seemed to waken him up. "Going back to town, going back to town, Tillotson?" he said, as if meditating. "Very well. Going back and plunging into the vortex! What would I take and change with you? I vow and protest I like our little things—nice people, you know, better than all your routs, and drums, and balls, and parties. 'We never can get you out, Tilney,' H.R.H. said to me over and over again. 'Why are you always holing at home in this confounded retirement?' Ah! No quiet for me, Tillotson, until we get to our old friend over there," pointing at the old cathedral, now all but steeped in moonlight. "The one thing, you know, Tillotson. The only thing, after all!"

Mr. Tillotson, who by this time knew the course that these reflections would take, did not reply to them, but told Mr. Tilney a piece of news that was very gratifying to him. "The

company have agreed to make you a director. I got the answer to-night. A paid director, too."

He started with delight. "A director! My dear Tillotson, this is goodness! this is friendship! to get back to the old place. I shall be able to draw breath now. I am consumed, wasting in this hole." (In a second Mr. Tilney had forgotten the one thing necessary.)

Mr. Tillotson set him right on this point. "You shall hear more about it," he said. "I must go now. I have to set out early. Good-bye! Thanks for all kindness."

"God bless you!" said the other, fervently. "God bless you, Tillotson." Then the other walked back in the moonlight to desolation and to the White Hart, listening to the clock striking twelve, and thinking that with that hour ended a short dream of happiness. He sat long in his ancient room, which seemed as blank, as desolate, and even mouldy as his own heart. Sometimes he paced to and fro, and struck his forehead with his hand. "One more miserable delusion," he said. "Stupid, insensible, folly, folly, as well as guilt!" And so he sat on and walked until the cold morning light began to steal in through the ancient red curtain of the White Hart's window. By the first train, which left at six, he had gone—not to London, but to another town, where he was to stay a few hours, and then go up. Now the white walls and cold penitential passages of the world were before him.

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

BLACK IS NOT QUITE WHITE.

THE late melancholy events in Jamaica have naturally called forth a burst of feeling; on one side, of sympathy and commiseration for our "poor oppressed brethren" (whose only crime is their colour); on the other, of wrath and indignation against a race for which so much has been done, and which has so ungratefully turned on its benefactors and attempted to destroy them.

Without pretending to prejudge the merits of the late rebellion, or of the means which were adopted to suppress it—questions which will, no doubt, be fully and fairly investigated—it may be suggested that both these extreme expressions of feeling are unreasonable and exaggerated. The first is the result of a total want of knowledge of the real character of the negro, and the second arises from the absence of reflection in a moment of excitement as to the causes which have produced that character.

Whatever may be the origin of races or their affinity (matters which must be left to ethnologists to determine if they can), there is no doubt that the original African negro is not a high moral type of human nature. Born and bred, not only in a state of barbarism, but under that particular phase of it which calls into play all the lower instincts of nature, with the view of surprising and entrapping his enemies, and at the same time of avoiding

to be outwitted himself, he is at last kidnapped, sold, shipped off, reduced to bondage, forced to work, and induced to employ all the low arts of deceit consequent on such a position.

From this stock the Jamaica negro was produced, and for many years the system was continued without any progress being made towards his moral improvement. Suddenly he was given his liberty. Long accustomed to look upon labour as the one great evil of life, and long unaccustomed to bestow a thought on his own wants, which had all been supplied for him, he believed himself to be ill used and deceived when he found that he was forced to work to live, and was at all events determined to work as little as possible.

Naturally improvident and indolent, he sought a fresh scope for his hereditary cunning in sharp-witted schemes to meet his wants and gratify his appetites and vices. When, failing in this he was satisfied barely to exist, he gradually fell lower and lower in the scale of humanity: not, however, without crying out against the oppressors who would not feed him in idleness, and not without repeated attempts at rebellion, in the senseless hope that by murdering those oppressors and seizing their property he would at last attain the goal of affluent indolence.

The population of Jamaica has probably increased since the date of emancipation, while the annual produce is scarcely more than one-fourth of what it then was.

One of the most marked characteristics of the negro—his idleness apart—is the perverted ideas his mind holds of religion; a very painful characteristic this. When religion is an abstract question, and not a practical thing, with the best educated as with the worst, it teaches nothing of charity, humility, patience, brotherly kindness, love. Under religion's cloak, murder calls itself vengeance of the Lord; the negro says, "I will repay for the Lord's sake;" he who does me an injury, willingly or unwillingly, is "my enemy and the Lord's;" the persecuted man is David, the aggressor is Saul. David's denunciations are quoted; faith in God's vengeance and in His wrath and anger is strong and perverted; faith in long-suffering, forbearance and forgiveness, has little or no existence in the negro's mind. Cant reigns mighty and omnipotent among them, and their most objectionable acts are almost invariably prefaced by a Bible quotation or an appeal to the Lord.

It is painful to view humanity under such an aspect, and equally painful to consider that it springs as much from the influences which have surrounded the negro, as from his hereditary instincts. Even those among the race who may be considered the respectable exceptions to the general state of degradation have not been able entirely to divest themselves of those instincts, as the following anecdotes, jotted down from a personal experience during five years' residence in the tropics, will exemplify.

The first man of colour who entered my service, well recommended, was William, as cook.

He was a smartly-dressed clean-looking man, with a manner at once intelligent and respectful. The result of his advent being, for some days, a series of good dinners, I congratulated myself on my valuable acquisition. "We are very well satisfied with your cookery," said I one day, in my innocence; whereat William grinned and writhed, and answered with that gentle humility and discretion which always characterised his speeches: "Take it very kind of missus to say so. When she do be pleased, I am proud. When she have any observations or *d'reckshans* (corrections) to make on de style of de cookery, beg she do so, and I 'trive to c'rect what she disapprove." What a happy footing between master and man, or mistress and man! Here was a paragon who would, doubtless, prove one of those dear faithful old servants so often recorded in the history of the man and brother, and who would dwell with us all his days.

But these days were already numbered. Shortly after my poor meed of praise had been offered, came William, sorrowful, embarrassed, but ever humble, discreet, and conscious of his own rectitude, to "say a word to missus."

That word was to this effect: "Master and missus were good to him; he wanted nothin', he could pass his life happy and contented in deir sarvice, his work was light, his victuals was abundant, but ah!—Ke-aptin' (captain) "of de steamar" (not specified) "him offer so much" (naming nearly double the wages of the place), "and missus she give so much less. For himself what cared he? But, alas! he had a wife and family to support. He would do nothin' underhand, he merely stated de fac'. Mustn't a husband and fader work for de sake of him wife and children?"

"Too true, O William! I admit it. I would have raised your wages five pounds a year, but I cannot give you such high wages as the steamers give. Of course I will not stand in your light; only find another cook before you leave."

He did find another cook, who made the trifling mistake of cooking the whole day's provisions for one vast substantial breakfast. Shortly afterwards a message was brought me that William had returned, and requested audience.

Beautifully he was dressed. Clean, meek, respectable as ever, he stood before me with downcast eyes, holding an open letter.

"Missus, I received a letter from my wife dis mornin'. She tell me I done very wrong to leave so good a master and missus for de sake of gain. Beg missus read what she say."

I opened and read the letter. Here is an extract of its contents:

"What, William, do you think to earn the blessing of the Lord by ingratitude, by running after gain, and forsaking the master and missus as have always been kind to you? Trust in your Hevinly Father to feed you and your children, return to the place you have left, 'trive by good conduc to repara de pas, and umbly ask pardon of a justley fended missus, but ask pardon yet more of a fended Father."

"And indeed, ma'am," said William, "I do feel very bad in my conscience, and I believe my wife says right. If missus will please take me back again, I'll do my best."

Somehow the negotiation ended in his resuming his post, *with the little increase I had spoken of*, and again life flowed on smoothly.

But there came a second episode in the sojourn of William. It was necessary to adjourn from town to country. On arriving there, the quality of the cookery was entirely changed. From being excellent, it became execrable. Remarks, suggestions, were alike unavailing. The artistic spirit seemed to have departed with the change of abode, and finally I gave William warning: whereat he was surprised, wounded, and scandalised.

What was the mystery?

A friend of William's had been living in the house, and had done all the cookery which William was quite incapable of doing himself; the friend had been comfortably boarded in the kitchen, as remuneration; but when we all migrated, the friend could not be conveyed with the rest of the establishment, unless some one paid his travelling expenses, or without inquiry being made. I leave it to my readers to determine whether the anecdote about "de Ke-apin of de steamar," and the religious wife, was true, merely adding (without comment) that it came to my knowledge that this pious father of a family had no child.

Another faithful old servant, and who lived with us upwards of four years, was John. He was honest and industrious, spent most of his wages in the schooling of his youngest child, and told me that he regarded master as his fader, and missus as his moder. He had the occasional weakness of "getting sick," which meant being extremely unwell in consequence of a few days' indulgence in strong liquors; but we found it best to wink at this. While John was with us a certain Francis was hired in the house as cook, between whom and John a deadly enmity sprang up. One night Francis sallied forth into the streets, armed with a bludgeon, and thirsting for revenge. He knew that John would pass by a certain road; it was dark and moonless; Francis lay in ambush, and when John was close upon him, raised his club, and knocked down John. Francis was a taller man, John was older and smaller, but vigorous and determined; he was up in a minute, and, pursuing his assailant, who fled in an ignominious manner, pulled him down, and seized one of his fingers between his teeth, holding on like a bulldog until it was bitten through. It subsequently had to be amputated. After which he (John) was heard to ejaculate piously, "I tank de Lord who give me de victory over my enemy!"

After the butchery at Morant Bay, is it not recorded that the assassins met together in a Baptist chapel and sang songs of praise for their victory?

John punished his children in the following manner: A man of few words, he wasted none on the offender, but arming himself with a

long thick leather strap, he applied it vigorously to his back or hers—for I saw him thus punish his daughter, a child of nine years old. It is said that his wife underwent the same wholesome discipline when John deemed it needful. Spite of this, Mrs. John stood up for her lord and master with a wife's devotion; for, on the occasion of John's dismissal from our service, his fellow-servants expressing certain sentiments of a not complimentary nature to his character, Mrs. John rushed furiously to the garden, and tore up the shrubs which John had planted, by the roots, in order "dat him enemies should not reap de benefit of him industry."

Never deeming these little ebullitions inconsistent with the practice of religion, Mrs. John might be seen every Sunday a regular attendant at the usual service, and at the communion also; she knelt meekly on the floor, her eyes upturned, her hands clasped, the personification of our converted sister, as the little tracts say. She was an attentive listener, too, for on Mondays (when she came for the washing) she would repeat as much of "minster's sarmon" as her hearers had patience to listen to.

One day, a thimble was brought me by Mrs. John's little girl. "Mother bid me say she found dat timple in your pocket, missus, when she wash your dress; and me was to tell you she poor, but proud."

Joe, the son of John, a clever little fellow and valuable as a servant (if he could have been induced to regard honesty as the best policy, which he couldn't), was put in prison one day by his master, for purloining. An eye-witness describes the following tableau vivant on the occasion: The victim sat on the floor, with conscious innocence written on his face; his mother read the Psalms aloud. A friend of Mrs. John's, much noted for the respectability of her character and the amiability of her disposition, paced to and fro, muttering imprecations against "dem stinken white people," as a sort of obligato accompaniment to the Song of David.

My English servant, on our paying a visit to a certain house, where she dined with the coloured folk, said, "Oh, ma'am, the niggers stand round the table, and are thrown bits like dogs." And so I found it afterwards, in my own kitchen. If you engage a certain number of servants, be sure they are nearly doubled. A groom keeps his assistant—some wretch too idle to work hard, or who is trying how long he can subsist without wages, on the scraps that fall to him; the cook ditto; the odd-job man ditto; besides these, are friends who "have de custom of de house," and come in for scraps too, nowise abashed. On the entrance of the mistress, an introduction takes place, and the friend makes a personal remark on the lady, usually complimentary: "Dis is Miss Mary Anne, ma'am; Miss Mary Anne, dis my missus." "And a nice buckra lady, too," says Miss Mary Anne, quietly eating my substance.

Prince among the ne'er-do-wells came Mr. Joseph: a man young, strong, intelligent, and highly educated for his class. Among his various

accomplishments, he succeeded admirably as cook, in which profession he might have earned high wages, either in a family or on board ship; but for his idleness. He entered my service, began well, got tired of work, preferred lounging in the streets, and, after coming home more than once at three in the afternoon to cook the four o'clock dinner, I dismissed him. He then hung about idle until his money was spent, again went into service, was turned out in a short time, lounged in the kitchen sub rosa—for I ordered him off when I saw him—then came, penitent, to beg that I would give him a trial during the absence of another cook who had gone some distance to get married. I told him he should receive certain wages—not higher than the ordinary rate—I keeping in hand the residue (of the highest given by private families), which he should have at the end of three months, if he, in the mean while, conducted himself well. But he was quite incorrigible. The old habit was too strong. He was again dismissed, and the money forfeited. He engaged himself as a ship-cook, and, with a few pounds in hand, soon left his employment, lounged on shore while his money lasted, sponged in kitchens when it was gone, and, when his clothes were too ragged even for that pursuit, went in for a little work again.

A certain mason, an excellent workman, who bore a good character, "knocked off" work, in order to celebrate the arrival of his family with several days' total idleness. When his money was expended, he came to his employer to borrow five dollars. The latter advised him to earn them in the regular way, which he could speedily do; but the mason indignantly declined, and worked no more for that enemy of the Lord.

I might enumerate many such instances. You cry out against the impertinence of your London cabmen; and you cry out against the oppressed state of the negro in Jamaica. What would you say if, on paying a visit to a friend in London, or any other town, your cabman (at the expiration of ten minutes) came and yelled at you under the windows, whip in hand, and looking as if he meant mischief, "Come now, sir! Can't wait all day! Come along, sir! Are you ever coming? I won't wait!" louder and with a yell. "Pay me my money and let I go! I say! &c. &c.," with a battering of the handle of his whip against the hall door. But this I have witnessed and heard on the part of a negro cabman in the town of Kingston. At least, if they are oppressed, (?) they are not cowed.

And now for one episode in the life of a nurse.

Anne came to me in that capacity, well recommended. She was black-skinned; but oh, "her heart white and pure as de white lady's!" By this time I was rather hardening and gradually becoming sceptical over flowery phrases. Anne's sweetness and angelic smiles at the baby made me suspicious. I soon received a letter from a lady to inform me that while driving out she met the child in his perambulator stationed in the middle of the road, and no nurse with him. That presently Anne appeared, dragged the

perambulator to the side of the road, upsetting it in her haste, and terrifying the child, who fortunately escaped uninjured. Of course I taxed her with this. She waxed indignant, fervid, holy, in her denials; but finally made out a story about a sick friend. So I contented myself with sending a guard to guard the nurse when she went out to guard the child, and took my time to seek another nurse. Meanwhile, some lady friends came to stay with me, and informed me that this woman begged of them clothes and money, saying she had not got the former, nor enough wages to pay for any. Her trunk was so large that one man could not lift it; her wages were high, and "everything found!" So I sternly bade her go, giving the money due to her into her hands. A scene ensued, of entreaty, confession, appeal. She was a woman who had been half ruined before she came to me; I had saved her from starvation; she would be homeless and friendless without me. Oh! if I had a Christian's heart, try her once, only once, and never should I have to repent it! I was moved, and I did try her. Soon afterwards, she left my child in the road two hours and a half while she amused herself among her friends. I then positively dismissed her. She went quietly, and her huge case full of dresses (I saw they were dresses, and costly too, for I had surprised her while fondling her treasures one day) followed her. It then came to my knowledge that, from the date of her first warning, she had taken a lodging, and furnished it, and that, immediately on quitting my service, she set up comfortably as a laundress.

I had a poor old woman pensioner, who came daily for the leaveings of breakfast and dinner. For years her husband had been bedridden; for years she, wretched soul, had lived in a state of semi-starvation, and miserable sickness. Having at that time a cook, whom I supposed to be a kind-hearted, conscientious man, I told him her case, and that I trusted in him to save her a little food daily. "Dat I will, missus," was the ready answer; "you do well to be kind to de poor. The Lord will reward you and your children." This had a touching sound, but the result of this trust of mine was that, on her approach, she was assailed by brutal language, and refused a morsel: while the food that she ought to have had was given to a fat flaunting woman too idle to work, who daily came to receive it.

Among these worthy servants, there was one whose quiet revenge for a rebuke was always to fling wine-glasses on the floor and smash them. Our stock of glass imported from home thus dwindled rapidly away. Did he, I wonder, "thank the Lord," who enabled him to revenge himself?

These few specimens of character, taken from the most honest, respectable, and civilised amongst the class (and who, unlike the lower grades, do not steal, murder, or habitually commit acts of savage brutality), are a pretty fair evidence of the nature, or second nature, or both combined, of the liberated negro in our

colonies at the present day. Let us remember that the white man is far more responsible for his actions than the black man; but let us also remember that his position is a trying one, in having to hold his own, far away, against an overwhelming force of numbers.

A NEW HUMANE SOCIETY.

To preserve human life; to put an end to tortures and cruelties now systematically inflicted on our poor countrymen and countrywomen at home, and many of which are as horrid and revolting, as any of the barbaric rites we read of as practised among savages; to substitute trained skill for brutal ignorance, and conscientious carefulness for wicked and inhuman neglect; to make wanton and aggravated homicide less common, and at least to ensure such tending and remedies for our sick and suffering poor, as humane men provide for their sick and suffering brutes; to free the national character from a deep stain, and to relieve the national conscience of the burden of a crying sin; such are the objects of the new Humane Society. In other words, its promoters propose to take the occupants of workhouse infirmaries out of the hands of men who are proved to have shamelessly abused their trust, and to place them in state hospitals appointed and controlled as the establishments supported by private charity are known to be. Our workhouses are already hospitals, in the sense of being filled with sick, infirm, and decrepid people, who need careful nursing and professional care; and the reform aimed at, is, to supply these with the necessities for the lack of which they languish and die;—how painfully, an occasional newspaper report tells us; how constantly, is only known to themselves and God.

The Association for the Improvement of the Infirmaries of the London Workhouses, owes its origin to the revelations of the Lancet commissioners, numbers many influential thinkers in its ranks, and is pledged to direct its action to the consolidation of the invalid departments of the metropolitan workhouses; to the bringing about of a hospital organisation under a central management, and to the levying of a general metropolitan rate for the support of the sick poor. Taking our facts from an interesting pamphlet by MR. ERNEST HART, let us first quote the statistics of a few London workhouses, and then examine into their disorganisation and mismanagement. In many instances we are able to confirm Mr. Hart's statements from our own personal observations; in some we can supplement them by facts acquired during investigations commenced and carried on independently; and the reader may accept all as trustworthy and temperate records of evils which are flourishing in rank luxuriance at our very doors.

First of the workhouse buildings. That of Clerkenwell is a wretched tumble-down place, which was certified by the Poor Law Board to

hold five hundred inmates. The metropolitan inspector has frequently urged upon the guardians the necessity of removing their paupers to a healthier and more commodious site; and has for years past condemned the confined yards and crowded wards of the present building as unsuited to their purpose. These parochial dignitaries have not yet, however, thought it necessary to make a change, and we learn that out of the five hundred and sixty people improperly crammed into their workhouse two hundred and fifty are sick, and two hundred and eighty infirm, the latter number including eighty who are insane. Remembering that *twelve hundred feet* of cubic space for each patient is the allowance recently prescribed as necessary for military hospitals by the Barrack and Hospital Commission, the condition of these five hundred and thirty sick and infirm people may be estimated by the fact that the cubic space for each is but *four hundred and twenty-nine feet*. Add to this, that the cramped staircases of this house are so intercepted and blocked up with inconvenient landing-places, as to be useless as mediums of ventilation; that the windows are insufficient in number; and that one of the narrow prison-like yards which form the only exercise-grounds for convalescents, contains the dead-house, and a commonly neglected dust-bin in close proximity; and the shocking unfitness of Clerkenwell workhouse for a public hospital will be understood.

At St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, the ground within the building is so much higher than that outside that those standing in its yards are on a level with the first-floor windows in Hemming's-row. This is due to the yards being composed of a disused burial-ground. Abutting on them, and so much beneath their level as to be practically underground, are the cellars chosen by the guardians as surgical wards. They are all less than nine feet high, and the average number of cubic feet per bed is *four hundred and twenty-eight feet*. The workhouse of the Strand Union is even less fitted for infirmary purposes than those already quoted. It is surrounded by noisy workshops and mews, and, as if this were not enough, the guardians have, with that keen eye to the main chance, and that noble disregard of the feelings of mere paupers, which are the distinguishing characteristics of parochial boards, established a carpet-beating business under the windows of the sick wards. The unhappy patients are, of course, stunned with the noise and poisoned with the dust, but carpet beating is remunerative, and, despite the remonstrances publicly made, the guardians are too much men of business to forego it out of any weak-minded and sentimental consideration for the helpless creatures committed to their care. It should be added, that seven-eighths of the sleeping accommodation here is occupied by the sick. The workhouse infirmary of St. George the Martyr is perilously unwholesome from its situation, surrounded as it is by bone-boiling, grease, and catgut-making establishments; while that of Greenwich

is below low-water mark, and with an average space per bed of *four hundred and fifty feet*. Many of the wards are low and hot, some have no water-service, none are suited to their purpose. Further, we are assured by Mr. Hart that besides the workhouses already named, those of Islington, St. Giles, and West Smithfield, have irredeemable defects, which render them unfit for hospital purposes; while those of St. James's, Westminster, Chelsea, St. Luke's, Lambeth, Lewisham, Camberwell, Bermondsey, Holborn, and London East, may be made suitable for chronic cases only, if certain important alterations be carried out. It is noteworthy, moreover, that even where new workhouses are being built, a wretchedly insufficient amount of space is allotted to each sick bed. At St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, for example, where a really magnificent pile of buildings has been erected, only *five hundred cubic feet* are allowed: a little more than a third of the number declared by competent authorities to be essential.

Passing from the workhouses to their discipline and internal arrangements, the results are even more painfully unsatisfactory. Let us compare the medical attendance at the hospitals supported by private charity, with that of the parochial infirmaries representing the hospitals of the state. For the three hundred and fifty patients at St. George's Hospital there are four surgeons and four physicians, who each pay an average of three visits a week, besides two resident apothecaries, three resident house-surgeons, and a dresser for each surgeon; St. Mary's Hospital, with one hundred and fifty patients, has three physicians in ordinary, three surgeons, four resident medical officers, and three dressers. At the Strand Union, on the other hand, with a floating population of nearly two hundred persons acutely sick, and four hundred who are chronically infirm, there is no resident medical officer. The one gentleman engaged to visit and prescribe for as many invalids as St. George's and St. Mary's Hospitals hold together, receives the munificent salary of one hundred and five pounds a year, out of which he is expected to find most of the drugs required. At Greenwich, where out of a thousand inmates nine hundred are more or less disabled, and where an average of four hundred are constantly under medical care, the only doctor is non-resident, has no dispenser to assist him, and is wretchedly underpaid. At Shoreditch, where out of a population of seven hundred, two hundred and twenty are sick, one hundred and forty insane, epileptic, and imbecile, besides the usual proportion of infirm, there is neither dispenser nor assistant; and the non-resident medical officer is supposed to see to the needs of those in his charge, in a hurried morning visit of a couple of hours. These facts and figures are unanswerable. We need draw no comparison between the relative acuteness of the disorders under which the patients in the two kinds of hospitals suffer. It is sufficient to know that under existing circumstances it is as impossible that the sick paupers of our workhouses can

be otherwise than neglected, as it is that the occupants of our regular hospital beds can be otherwise than well cared for. In not more than a fourth of the workhouses in the metropolitan district is there a resident medical officer, and in every case the doctor's interest is made to be in direct opposition to that of his patient. The rule in the majority of cases is that he shall find medicine out of his inadequate stipend, and even where drugs are provided he has to act as his own dispenser. Thus he saves money by withholding remedies, and labour by avoiding change of prescription. Add to the temptation implied, that he is always poorly paid, and that the workhouse is often looked upon as a mere insignificant supplement to his private practice; and, that our sick paupers do not die off even more rapidly and unnecessarily than they do, becomes a mere testimony to their tenacity of life.

The nurses employed in workhouse infirmaries are generally paupers, to whom a full meat diet, with, perhaps, an allowance of beer and gin, is made the substitute for salary, and who mismanage their duties and neglect their patients in a way incredible to those unacquainted with the bitter cruelties of workhouse rule. Mr. Hart, who is corroborated by Doctor Anstie, of the Westminster Hospital, who accompanied him on his inspection, draws this picture of the state of affairs in the externally palatial establishment of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch:

"To make matters as bad as possible, the nurses, with one exception, are pauper nurses, having improved rations and different dress, but no pecuniary encouragements. They are mostly a very inferior set of women; and the males, who are 'nursed' by male paupers, are yet worse off. The nursing organisation at this establishment is as bad as can be. The male nurses especially struck us as a peculiarly rough, ignorant, and uncouth set. There are no night-nurses. Desirous to ascertain what was the condition of the patients under such an administration, we became a little curious as to details. . . . The outer surface of the beds is clean, and the linen generally, through the able-bodied wards, tolerably so; but as to the lying-in wards, they were frequently filthy with crusted blood and discharges, and in the sick wards also they were far from being well kept.

"The next part of inquiry was as to the regularity of the administration of food and medicines. Medicines are administered in this house with shameful irregularity. The result of our inquiries showed that of nine consecutive patients, only four were receiving their medicines regularly. A poor fellow lying very dangerously ill with gangrene of the leg had had no medicine for three days, because, as the male 'nurse' said, his mouth had been sore. The doctor had not been made acquainted either with the fact that the man's mouth was sore, or that he had not had the medicines ordered for him. A female, also very ill, had not had her medicine for two days, because the very infirm old lady in the next bed, who, it seemed, was appointed

by the nurse to fulfil this duty, had been too completely bedridden for the last few days to arise and give it to her. Other patients had not had their medicine because they had diarrhoea; but the suspension had not been made known to the doctor, nor had medicine been given to them for their diarrhoea. The nurses generally had the most imperfect ideas of their duties in this respect. One nurse plainly avowed that she gave medicines three times a day to those who are very ill, and twice or once a day as they improved. The medicines were given all down a ward in a cup; elsewhere in a gallipot. The nurse said she 'poured out the medicine, and judged according.' In other respects the nursing was equally deficient. The dressings were roughly and badly applied. Lotions and water-dressings were applied in rags, which were allowed to dry and stick. I saw sloughing ulcers and cancers so treated. In fact, this was the rule. Bandages seemed to be unknown. But the general character of the nursing will be appreciated by the detail of one fact, that I found in one ward two paralytic patients with frightful sloughs of the back; they were both dirty, and *lying on hard straw mattresses*; the one dressed only with a rag steeped in chloride-of-lime solution, the other with a rag thickly covered with ointment. This latter was a fearful and very extensive sore, in a state of absolute putridity; the patient was covered with filth and excoriated, and the stench was masked by strewing dry chloride of lime *on the floor under the bed*. A spectacle more saddening or more discreditable cannot be imagined. Both these patients have since died: no inquest has been held on either."

If it be asked how this horrible condition of things could have escaped the government inspector, the answer is ready. There are forty-one workhouses in the metropolitan district, and visiting these from time to time forms but a portion of the duties of the gentleman in whose charge that district is supposed to be. The real supervision and control is necessarily entrusted to a visiting committee appointed by and from the guardians themselves, who, at stated intervals, take a hurried glance at their own handiwork, and pronounce it very good. It was formally advanced in the last report of the Poor Law Board, that if this committee perform its duty, the scandalous cases of cruelty and neglect to sick and dying paupers can never occur. Without endorsing this highly imaginative hypothesis, let me quote the opinion of a guardian in whose parish workhouse a death took place, under peculiarly atrocious circumstances, a few weeks ago. "It's very well," remarked this gentleman, with great cogency and force, "for the newspapers to make a fuss, and to say we're brutes, and I don't say we're right in this; but if you'll remember that we're all men in business, and that our regular board meeting takes up several hours a week, you'll perhaps understand why our visiting committees hurry through their work. How long does it take us to inspect the wards and vouch for the proper tending and care of

one thousand two hundred people? About two hours. Of course the master goes round with us, and of course we leave it principally to him, and then fill in the blanks below the printed questions in the Poor Law Board's book with 'Yes' or 'No,' as the case may be. No! I don't remember any of us ever making an independent report. We just fill up the book, and are glad when the job's over, for it's a bother, and we get nothing for it, and it's impossible to do it properly without giving up more time than is possible for men like me." It is to ensure the proper performance of duties which this plain-spoken guardian honestly confessed were shirked, and for the lack of which a pauper had just died miserably and shamefully, and to make the task of inspection a practical reality, that the new Humane Society asks for public support.

Let me quote some more personal experiences proving the urgent necessity of reform. Some months ago it was my privilege to accompany a representative of the Poor Law Board on an official inquiry into the condition of the sick wards of a London workhouse. Some necessary alterations were urged as essential to decency and health; and "our guardians talked it over, sir, when you recommended it before, but thought it wasn't necessary!" was given in reply. A few minutes later a serious blot was discovered in the discipline of the wards, and "our guardians wouldn't hear of it, sir, when I mentioned what you said," was elicited. Through the day's inspection, I saw evils which had been condemned for years still flourishing; heard recommendations made and advice given, which have never been, and, under existing management, never will be, carried out, and have ever since been puzzled to know the use of an authority which is powerless, and of advice that may be ignored with impunity by a handful of petty jobbers, whose self-interest is as keen as their sympathies and intelligence are obtuse. The Poor Law Board is utterly powerless over guardians who are obstinate and obstructive; and, but for the comments and strictures of the press, its reports and inspections would be still more futile and inoperative than they are. As it is, its officials are not unfrequently defied. I have myself seen a guardian wag the forefinger of menace at a government inspector who, in the course of his duty, reminded those present that the regulations of their workhouse were contrary to the law; and I have heard a guardian, in the most flowery style of pot-house eloquence, denounce the same official as a cozenor, because a few pounds had been struck off the parochial balance-sheet by the district auditor as improperly claimed.

It was a touching scene. There had been some stern comments upon the inhumanity of this local board, and the inspector attended its meeting, to hear whether its members meant to persist in their defiance of official authority and public opinion, or whether they would submit to both, to the extent of making decent provision for their poor. They had determined to withdraw their stupid opposition, but, in revenge, set their crack orator upon the unhappy official

whose adverse minute had, in the words of their respected chairman, "set them papers a' writin' of us down." I can see that orator now, with acts of parliament, official reports, blue-books, and parish documents, at his elbow, rising to ask, with affected moderation, if the Poor-Law Board claimed to teach the guardians how they were to spend the parishioners' money? I can see him, too, blandly attempting to convict the official of self-contradiction, of vexatious interference, of unfairness and hostility; and I can see his colleagues at the board solemnly wagging their vacuous faces, and ticking off what they considered his oratorical points, like a batch of very unintellectual supernumeraries rehearsing the trial scene in the Merchant of Venice. This conduct was prompted, be it remembered, by the indignation of guardians at being called upon to make suitable provision for paupers, and it is a fair sample of the spirit in which every suggestion for parochial reform is received. The central management aimed at by the Association for the Improvement of the Infirmarys of London Workhouses would remedy all this, and place every detail of nursing, of classification, and of medical attendance for the sick, in independent hands. It is well to remember that while Mrs. Betsey Prig has been largely superseded in our hospitals by properly trained nurses, she flourishes in a highly aggravated form in the metropolitan workhouses it is sought to amend. Reduced in circumstances and soured in spirit, deprived of liberty and perquisites, remunerated by beer and gin, this model nurse becomes a demon of torture to the hapless wretches under her. Scalding sick paupers to death in boiling water; persistently aggravating sick paupers' sores until they become mortal, and the victims die; slaying sick paupers by administering wrong medicines, and by giving stimulants when stimulants are death; killing sick paupers by withholding and getting drunk on their medical comforts, and by turning them out of the sick wards at night,—are among the gentle peculiarities of which this representative lady has been constantly convicted during the last few years.

Of the male Prigs, the broken-down cobblers or chapmen, who are selected by guardians to nurse sick male paupers, I will only say that they are rough, brutal, and ignorant; that they emulate their sister in cruelty and neglect; and that one of them recently justified himself to me for allowing a poor wretch who had tumbled out of bed in a fit to die on the floor without assistance. "He were dead enough, he were," remarked this warm-hearted functionary, "and wot were the use o' rousin' Mr. Blunt, or anybody? *They* couldn't bring a dead man to life agin, not they indeed; and why should they be disturbed? No, no, I knows my dooty better. 'Ow did I know he was dead? Wy I shook him, and he never answered, that's how. Wos the body cold wen I see it? Yes, it were; *leastwise his feet wos quite cold.*" All this with a senile assumption of wisdom, judgment, and tact, which was inex-

pressibly grim. During the same visit, we looked in hap-hazard at one of the wards we passed. It was devoted to the chronically infirm. What is the screen round that bed for—anybody dead? "Oh no, not dead, sir; but one of the old men is rather seriously ill, and I thought it would be more comfortable, both for him and for the others, to have him screened off. We're always anxious to do everything in our power, you see, and——" But we were at the screen before the sentence was concluded, and there we found the seriously ill patient seriously ill no longer; and that his spirit, unwatched, unministered, had passed silently away from boards, and screens, and wards, leaving the poor neglected body to be moved when it should please some one in authority to discover it was dead.

It is to uproot and extirpate the horrible indifference proved by such instances as these, that the movement commented on has been inaugurated. Professedly confined to ameliorating the condition of the sick poor, it is fair to hope that its action will indirectly benefit the poor generally. If it be decided that workhouse infirmaries are to be supported by a general rate, the logical deduction would seem to be that the remaining portions of those establishments may be similarly provided for. Of course we shall have a parrot cry against centralisation, and be solemnly warned of the danger of tampering with local self-government. It will be strange, however, if the solid benefits of the latter cannot be secured without retaining evils which are inconceivably wicked and unjust; and if by some fusion of the elements of responsibility and representation we do not secure justice both for ratepayers and the poor. It needs a stout heart and a good cause to attack cupidity and obstinacy in their strongholds; but the new association possesses both, and may hope for the support of all who believe the alleviation of helpless suffering to be a responsibility which a Christian society should cheerfully accept.

AT HOME WITH THE SPIRITS.

I HAVE so good an opinion of human nature, that if a person were solemnly to tell me, in language interlarded with pious phrases, that he had once died and been brought to life again, I should be disposed to believe rather that he was a deluded person who deceived himself, than that he was a canting liar, attempting to deceive me. It is easy to believe that a desperate man, whose life is at stake, or who is in some other great emergency, will call God to witness that which is not true; but it is not easy to believe that a man, moving in respectable society, who is under no awful dread of this kind, could deliberately seek his daily bread, and strive after notoriety, by professions which he knows to be false, wicked, and audaciously blasphemous. With this disposition to regard the apostles of startling and

incredible doctrine rather as fools than rogues, I have always listened to the promulgation of startling and incredible doctrine with more than usual impartiality. I have always given them a fair hearing; I have never met them with scoffing or active opposition, and I have endeavoured to submit myself to the influences which they profess to act under. I have taken certain means of my own to test the genuineness of those influences, but I have never wilfully resisted anything that seemed likely to carry conviction to my mind. I feel satisfied, therefore, that the conclusions at which I have arrived have not been inspired by bitterness, nor prompted by prejudice. I have given mediums and manifestations a fair hearing, from the electro-biological period of twenty years ago, down to Mr. Home's last lecture at Willis's Rooms, and I purpose, in this paper, to glance at my experiences, and record my impressions.

My earliest recollection of "manifestations" carries me back twenty years to a certain thatched-covered hut, which stood then—and stands now—on the brow of a Scotch mountain. In that hut lived a shoemaker. Like most Scotchmen of his class, he had that dangerous thing, a little learning. He had picked up a volume of Combe's works, and he took a fancy to phrenology. He had a journeyman, who read the book when his master was done with it, and he also took a fancy to phrenology. In course of time both master and man became phrenology mad. They sat together on their stools with a phrenological bust before them, and talked about bumps while they hammered the leather upon their lapstones. But while they progressed in abstract science, they lost way in the practical art of manufacturing shoes. This was the natural consequence of paying a larger share of their devotions to Mr. Combe than to St. Crispin. They devoted more attention to the formation of the head than to the anatomy of the feet, and when this bore its inevitable bitter fruit, loss of business, the shoemaker and his journeyman went so far beyond their lasts as to become lecturers and demonstrators in electro-biology. I believe this is the history of most of the professors of the mystic arts. A little—a very little—learning, a soul above business, a vaulting ambition, an inordinate vanity, some degree of belief at first, but eventually the necessity to become charlatans and quacks to sustain their original pretensions.

The shoemaker and his journeyman adopted the practice of electro-biology from what they had read in the newspapers. Living on a barren hill-side, far away from towns, they had never seen anything of the kind in practice. But they were apt scholars.

I well remember their first séance. It was given at the manse, the house of the minister. The minister himself was much interested in the experiments, and as there was no pretence of anything beyond physical and psychological manifestations—the spiritual pretence was yet to

come—willingly allowed the shoemaker and his man to exhibit in his dining-room. This is what the shoemaker did. He placed his man in a chair, stared into his eyes, made passes at him, and so put him into what was called a mesmeric trance. When he was in this state, the master touched his bumps to produce manifestations in accordance with the faculty which they were supposed to cover. Thus, when he rubbed the bump of benevolence, the journeyman gave away everything he had in his pockets, and I remember that all his personal belongings consisted of three-halfpence, a clasp-knife, a short pipe, a flint and steel, and a small-tooth comb. When the master touched the bump of acquisitiveness, the man laid hands upon and pocketed everything within his reach. When time and tune were touched, the man danced and sang. But the great sensation was at the close of the séance, when on his bump of amativeness being manipulated, the journeyman started from his seat, and proceeded in a frantic manner to hug and kiss the servant girls who formed part of his audience. I think it was in consequence of this manifestation being a little too life-like and real, that experiments in electro-biology were not repeated at the manse.

Many persons believed in the truth of these phenomena, partly because they thought them probable, and partly because they had faith in the honesty of the shoemaker. They were not wrong in their opinion of the shoemaker; but the whole thing was an imposture nevertheless. The shoemaker was the dupe of his man.

I am strongly disposed to believe, nay, I am sure, that this is frequently the case among the spiritualists; and that where there are two or three tricksters, there are half a dozen credulous persons, who believe in the imposture which they unwittingly help to practise upon others.

But electro-biology was too tame a trick to hold the attention of the public for any length of time, and it became necessary to excite the interest of the credulous by more daring feats, just as the acrobat in the ring finds it necessary, when the performance begins to flag, to increase the number of hoops through which he jumps, or to double his sommersaults and the risk of breaking his neck. Electro-biology was mundane, and just within the bounds of physical probability. It now became "an object" to introduce a supra-mundane element, as they call it, and to present phenomena which would accord with a belief in the unseen world, while it would defy physical inquiry. When first introduced, spiritualism presented itself in a very mild and modest form. It assumed to be little more than a development of animal magnetism. The professors began by making tables turn; and when this became monotonous, they made them rap. The next thing was to declare that the raps were produced by spirits of the departed wishing to communicate with their friends on earth. When this in its turn was getting stale, Mr. Daniel Home introduced the spirit hand, spirit writing, and the great sensation feat of floating in the air. When inquiry came to close quar-

ters with these manifestations, Mr. Home moved on, leaving the stage clear for the next novelty, which was the rope-tying of the Davenports. Meantime, the new doctrine had taken strong hold of many persons in this country, and, strange to say, the believers were chiefly persons moving in the upper circles of society, some of them distinguished for their high intellectual attainments. Half a dozen years ago, spirit inquiry was pursued with almost devotional earnestness in West-end drawing-rooms, at the receptions of celebrated literary characters, and at private midnight meetings at clubs. I am telling a plain unvarnished truth, when I state that I have seen a circle of literary men and journalists, instructors of the people, sitting round a table, for hours, waiting for rap-messages from their dead relatives. One conversed with the spirit of his father, and the spirit of his father told him to burn what he had in his pocket. What he had in his pocket was a piece which he had written (to order) for one of the theatres. Acting on the advice of his father's spirit, he withdrew the piece, and solemnly counselled all his fellow-authors not to venture on the same subject. One of his fellow-authors, however, had a communication from a spirit telling him that *he* might use the subject; and *he did* use it! The first mentioned author is now dead, and I am not alone in the belief that the excitement of spirit rapping aggravated his disease and accelerated his death. One of this circle of rappers (an instructor of the people) was troubled by an evil spirit, who distinguished himself by using obscene language. Whenever this spirit began to rap out bad words, the instructor of the people endeavoured to lay him by holding up a little gold cross which he carried at his watch-guard.

Mr. Home did not depart from England until he had appointed a band of apostles to preach the gospel which he came to found and proclaim. I trust I am not uncharitable in suspecting that, in his selection of persons, he aimed at a sort of parody of the original constitution of the Christian Mission. His chosen disciples were humble folks, flower-makers, and menders of shoes. These disciples, with the aid of converts in a higher sphere, have written his Testament in the pages of two periodicals devoted to spiritualism. In these journals we are presented with a record of Home's miracles, and those of his disciples. When Mr. Home took leave of his disciples, he was lifted up to the ceiling in their presence. Is this also a parody of a certain event in sacred history? When I come to notice the lecture which Mr. Home delivered the other evening at Willis's Rooms, the reader will be able to answer the question for himself.

We come now to the Davenport Brothers. They professed to be bound and unbound by spirit hands, and they made an affidavit, upon oath, that they had been released from prison by a spirit. They followed Home as a sort of twin Apostle Paul of the new doctrine. For some time previous to the appearance of these mediums,

faith in spiritualism had been growing languid, and the practice was falling into disuse. But the moment the fame of the Davenports reached this country, the "circles" were stirred to new life, and the pretensions of the new apostles were admitted before they gave any proof of their powers. They were received by the "circles" with open arms, and their wonderful performances were hailed as a most triumphant attestation of the truths of spiritualism. The triumph of the faithful, however, was of short duration. The practices of the Davenports were exposed again and again, and exposed more thoroughly than those of any of their predecessors. When Mr. Addison, who was said by the spiritualists to be a medium in spite of himself, offered Mr. Home fifty pounds if he could float in the air in his presence, Mr. Home escaped from the dilemma by declining the challenge; but the Davenports, too confident of their skill, submitted to a test and were found out. The complete exposure of this last form of spiritualism has worked a great change in the tactics of the apostles. Finding it no longer possible to cope with the band of detectors, who have made it their mission to meet and expose them on all occasions, they have dropped miracle working, and now confine themselves to preaching spiritualism as a new faith.

It may seem incredible, but it is nevertheless a fact, that Mr. D. Home is now representing himself as the apostle of a divine mission founded on table-turning and spirit-rapping. He declares that he received his commission, as St. Paul received his, in a voice from Heaven, saying:

"Daniel, fear not, my child, God is with you; be truthful, and God shall be with you always, cure the sick," &c.

On Thursday, the fifteenth of February, I attended Willis's Rooms to hear the apostle preach; but before I could bring myself under the influence of the new gospel, I was called upon to pay ten shillings and sixpence. "Are there no five-shilling seats?" I asked. The answer was "No; they are all gone; only a few half-guinea seats left." I paid my half guinea and entered the room; and found that there were plenty of five-shilling seats vacant, but only a few half-guinea ones. On coming out I accused the man at the door of having (to use the mildest term) *deceived* me. He did not deny it; but said, in excuse, that it was not his fault; he had been told to say there were no five-shilling seats. Was it Daniel who told him to say so, "Daniel, my child," sacredly enjoined by the voice from Heaven to be truthful?

There was a full congregation, and the lecturer informed us that it comprised many persons eminent in the world of letters and believers. Hearing the lecturer quoting Scripture in support of his views, and seeing those eminent persons humbly and submissively sitting under him, bowing their heads as he bowed his, at the mention of a sacred name, I was disposed—notwithstanding the ten-and-sixpenny transaction—

to regard the proceedings in a charitable spirit. Surely, I thought to myself, this man must believe what he is saying. As I enter the room, I catch the words "through Jesus Christ our Lord," and Home is reverently bowing his head. I sat down with a feeling that I was at church, fully prepared to yield myself to the force of any wholesome influence that might be brought to bear upon me.

I will relate briefly what I heard and saw, and what was the impression left upon my mind.

As Mr. Home takes credit for being a medium, with extraordinary powers of body and mind, he can scarcely object to a description of his person. He is a tall, thin man, with broad, square shoulders, suggestive of a suit of clothes hung upon an iron cross. His hair is long and yellow; his teeth are large, glittering, and sharp; his eyes are a pale grey, with a redness about the eyelids, which comes and goes in a ghostly manner as he talks. When he shows his glittering, sharp teeth, and that red rim comes round his slowly rolling eyes, he is not a pleasant sight to look upon. His hands were long, white, and bony, and you knew, without touching them, that they were icy cold. He stooped over his paper, and rarely looked up, except to turn his eyes towards heaven in an appeal to the Deity. The first part of the lecture was very dull and heavy, being all about the indestructibility of matter. Before this "head" was exhausted I counted fifteen members of the congregation who were fast asleep. After my experience at the pay-place it was rather startling to hear Mr. Home disclaiming all mercenary motives, and declaring that he had never received, and never would receive, money for his work. In a private circular to his friends he says, "I need not tell you how important it is to me to have the support of my friends, not only as a comfort and encouragement to me, but as essentially aiding the cause in which they and I are deeply interested. Much, indeed, of *my own fortune* must depend on the issue of this experiment." I leave the reader to reconcile this appeal with his disavowal of mercenary motives how he or she can.

Mr. Home then proceeded to show that spiritualism was no new doctrine, but had existed for ages. Tables were used for eliciting responses from spirits fifteen centuries ago, and some of the best and greatest of men in all ages had been spiritualists. Among the number he mentioned Wesley, Baxter, Swedenborg, Luther, and Judge Edmunds of New York. To prove the possibility of the visions which had appeared to himself, he instanced the dreams, visions, and apparitions which are recorded in the Bible. Angels appeared to Moses, Balaam, and Gideon, a spirit passed before Job, an apparition appeared to Saul, Christ was transfigured. Why should not he, Mr. H., see such things, and be lifted up to the ceiling of a room in the presence of his disciples? It was a contradiction to deny the truth of spirit-rapping, when every Sunday in church we declared our belief in the

communion of saints. Such was the argument.

Then we had the statistics of modern spiritualism. There were five hundred public mediums, fifty thousand private ones, and millions of believers. In France, Spain, Holland, Belgium, and other countries on the Continent, it had made great progress. The work had been slower in England, but it had borne fruit among the literary and educated classes, and many persons of the highest distinction were its avowed advocates. He next proceeded to relate his own experiences. The gift of mediumship had been in his family for four generations, and the possessor of it had generally been a delicate person and had died young. His (Mr. H.'s) cradle had been rocked by unseen hands, and at three years of age he had a vision, in which he saw his little cousin dying, though he resided many miles away. When his mother died, a rapping was heard on the table. His aunt, thinking that it was done by young Daniel, threw a chair at him, and accused him of being an imp of the devil. The good lady thought to lay the evil spirit by placing the Bible on the table and leaning upon it; but table, Bible, aunt and all, were lifted into the air. Two years ago, in looking into a crystal ball, at Dieppe, he saw an excited crowd and a man being assassinated. He exclaimed, "That is Abraham Lincoln," and several months afterwards the vision was verified. He also asserted that he had been lifted up to the ceiling of a brightly-lighted room, in the presence of several spectators. All these wonderful stories he told with perfect earnestness, and it was evident that the majority of his audience implicitly believed every word he said. I could not resist a short incredulous laugh now and then, and every time I uttered it a score of scowling eyes were turned upon me, as if I had been a bad boy misbehaving myself before the clergyman in the pulpit.

When Mr. Home was in the middle of his statistics, Professor Anderson, the conjuror, rose from a back seat and said, "That is wrong." Said Mr. Home, "When I have finished my lecture, I will hear what you have to say." Accordingly, when the lecture was finished, the Professor walked up the room, ascended the platform, and began deliberately to take off his coat. Mr. Home, not liking the look of this proceeding, immediately hopped down from the platform and began distributing bills among his friends. But the conjuror had no intention of challenging Mr. Home to fisticuffs. He had merely taken off his great-coat to give fuller play to his lungs in a meditated effort of oratory. But the congregation declined to listen to him. His first word was drowned in hisses and cries of "Off, off." He tried again and again to obtain a hearing, but in vain; and shouting at the top of his voice "Swindle! humbug! blasphemy!" &c., the conjuror was obliged to resume his coat and descend. He had not one friend in the room.

Mr. Home was on the most intimate terms

with his congregation. On leaving the platform he mingled among them, and I noticed that they were all anxious to shake him by the hand. I have seen the same anxiety displayed to shake hands and converse with a pet parson, or a popular actor. In my hearing, several ladies expressed a wish to speak to Mr. Home "just one word," and I heard a gentleman, leading up a sad-eyed wistful-looking lady, ask Mr. Home to "settle with her." Settle what? My impression was that the lady was anxious to consult the spirits. Mr. Home promised to settle with her another time. Women thronged round him as if they were anxious "to touch the hem of his garment." I make no doubt whatever that some of them regarded him as a medium between themselves and Heaven.

Now what is the doctrine which Mr. Home propounds, and all these people subscribe to as a new article of faith? Boldly, this—that spiritualism founded upon table-rapping, rope-tying, and banjo-playing in a cupboard, is *a means of man's salvation!* These are Mr. Home's own words. The apostles of the faith are now going about holding meetings with the evangelical purpose of bringing the working classes to a knowledge of God through Mr. Home, Mrs. Marshall, the Davenport Brothers, and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace! These are the mediators under the new dispensation. And we are asked to believe in them on the evidence of their miracles. But why not believe in Mr. Addison, who is a greater miracle worker than any of them? I have just visited this gentleman at his own house, and have witnessed signs and wonders of the most marvellous description. I handcuffed him and secured him like a spread eagle to two staples placed at the extremities of a cabinet. In one minute he released himself. I locked him in a box, which I afterwards corded and sealed. In two minutes he was out of the box, and the box still remained locked and corded. I bound him, tied him in a sack, and put him into a cupboard. In less than three minutes, on the door being opened, I found him unbound, with the sack still tied up in his hand. He turned off the gas, and on stretching out my hand, I felt him floating in the air. When he returned to the floor, he lighted the gas by touching it with his finger. He said I could do this. I tried, and the moment I touched the gas-burner the flames sprang forth.

When Mr. Addison first gave an exhibition of his miracles, he was hailed by the spiritualists as "a medium with powers more advanced than anything yet heard of in modern times." He was asked to become an apostle, and one enterprising person offered him ten pounds a night for three months to give séances. Mr. Addison, however, preferred to expose rather than aid the pretensions of the spiritualists, and in their wrath and disappointment they call him an impostor. On which side does the imposture lie?

I may mention that the means by which Mr. Addison works his miracles are exceedingly ingenious. When he shows you how the trick is

done, you are as much astonished at the subtlety of the contrivance as at the effect it produces.

STUCK FAST.

ABOUT a year after my scaffold accident,* I goes home one night, and Mrs. Burge—that's our nex'-room neighbour—shows me something wrapped up in flannel, all pink and creasy, and very snuffly, as though it wanted its nose blowing; which couldn't be expected, for it hadn't got any to signify.

"Ain't it a little beauty?" she says.

Well, I couldn't see as it was; but I didn't like to say so, for I knew my wife Polly had been rather reckoning on what she said we ought to have had more'n a year ago; so I didn't like to disappoint her, for I knew she lay listenin' in the nex' room.

Polly always said there never was such a baby as that one; and somehow it *was* taking to see how her face used to light up all over smiles when she thought I warn't looking; and I knew it was all on account of the little un. She never said she felt dull now; and when at home of a night I used to think how my mates would laugh to see me a-handling the little thing that was allus being pushed into my face to kiss; when I'm blest if ever I see such a voracious un in my life: it would hang on to you—nose, lip, anywhere—in a minute.

One day, when it was about nine months old, it was taken all of a sudden like with a fit. Polly screamed to me to run for the doctor; for it happened that I was on the club that week, and at home with a bad hand. I run for him, and he soon come; and then there was a warm bath and medicine; but afterwards, when I saw the little thing lying on Polly's lap so still and quiet, and with a dull film forming over its eyes, I felt that something was coming, though I dared not tell her; and about twelve o'clock the little thing suddenly started, stared wildly an instant, and then it was all over.

My hand warn't bad any more that week; for it took all my time to try and cheer up my poor heartbroken lass. She did take on dreadful, night and day, night and day, till we buried it; and then she seemed to take quite a change, and begged of me to forgive what she called her selfishness, and wiped her eyes once for all, as she said, and talked about all being for the best. But she didn't know that I lay awake of a night, feeling her cry silently till the pillow was soaked with tears.

We buried the little one on the Sunday, and on the Monday morning I was clapped on to a job that I didn't much relish, for it was the rebricking of a sewer that ran down one of the main streets, quite fifty feet underground.

Arter two years in London I'd seen some change, but this was my first visit to the bowels of the earth. I'd worked on drains

* See page 65 of the present volume.

down in the country, but not in such a concern as this: why a Lifeguard might have walked down it easy; so that there was plenty of room to work. But then, mind you, it ain't pleasant work; there you go, down ladder after ladder, past gas-pipes and water-pipes, and down and down, till you get to the stage stretched across the part you are at work on, with the daylight so high up, as seen through boards, and scaffolds, and ladders, that it's no use to you who are working by the light of flaring gas. There in front of you is the dark black arch; and there behind you is another; while under your feet the foul rushing water hurries along, sending up a smell as turns your silver watch, and every sixpence and shilling you have in your pocket, black as the water that swirls bubbling along. Every word you speak sounds hollow and echoing, while it goes whispering and rumbling along the dark arch till you think it has gone, when all at once you hear it again quite plain in a way as would make you jump as much as when half a brick or a bit o' hard mortar dropped into the water.

But talk about jumping, nothing made me jump more than when a bit of soil, or a stone, was loosened up above and came rattling down. I've seen more than one chap change colour; and I know it's been from the thought that, suppose the earth caved in, where should we be? No doubt the first crush in would do it, and there'd be an end of workmen and foreman; but there seemed something werry awful in the idea o' being buried alive.

Big as the opening was, when I went to work it made me shudder: there was the earth thrown out; there was the rope at the side; there was the boarding round; there it was for all the world like a big grave, same as I'd stood by on a little scale the day before; and feeling a bit low-spirited, it almost seemed as though I was going down into my own, never to come up any more.

Werry stupid and foolish ideas, says you—far-fetched ideas. Werry likely, but that's what I thought; and there are times when men has werry strange ideas; and I'll tell you for a fact that something struck me when I went down that hole as I shouldn't come up it again; and I didn't, neither. Why the werry feel o' the cold damp place made you think o' being buried, and when a few bits of earth came and rattled down upon the stage above my head, as soon as the first start was over it seemed to me so like the rattling o' the earth but a few hours before upon a little coffin, that something fell with a pat upon my bright trowel, which, if had been left, would ha' been a spot o' rust.

Nothing like work to put a fellow to rights; and I soon found that I was feeling better, and the strokes o' my trowel went ringing away down the sewer as I cut the bricks in half; and after a bit I almost felt inclined to whistle, but I didn't, for I kept on thinking of that solitary face at home—the face that always brightened up when I went back, and had

made such a man ov me as I felt I was, for it was enough to make 'any man vain to be thought so much of. And then I thought how dull she'd be, and how fond she'd be o' looking at the drawer where all the little things were kept; and then I—well, I ain't ashamed of it, if I am a great hulking fellow—I took care that nobody saw what I was doing, while I had a look at a little bit of a shoe as I had in my pocket.

I didn't go home to dinner, for it was too far off; so I had my snack, and then went to it again directly along with two more, for we was on the piece. We had some beer sent down to us, and at it we went till it was time to leave off; and I must say as I was glad of it, and didn't much envy the fresh gang coming on to work all night, though it might just as well have been night with us. I was last down, and had jest put my foot on the first round of the ladder, when I heard something falling as it hit and jarred the boards up'ards; and then directly after what seemed to be a brick caught me on the head, and, before I knew where I was, I was off the little platform, splash down in the cold rushing water that took me off and away yards upon yards before I got my head above it; and then I was so confused and half stunned that I let it go under again, and had been carried ever so far before, half drowned, I gained my legs and leaned, panting and blinded, up against the slimy wall.

There I stood for at least ten minutes, I should suppose, shuddering and horrified, with the thick darkness all around, the slimy, muddy bricks against my hands, the cold, rushing water beneath me, and my mind in that confused state that for a few minutes longer I didn't know what I was going to do next, and wanted to persuade myself that it was all a dream, and I should wake up directly.

All at once, though, I gave a jump, and, instead o' being cold with the water dripping from me, I turned all hot and burning, and then again cold and shuddery; for I had felt something crawling on my shoulder, and then close against my bare neck, when I gave the jump, and heard close by me a light splash in the water—a splash which echoed through the hollow place, while, half to frighten the beasts that I fancied must be in swarms around me, half wrung from me as a cry of fear and agony, I yelled out,

“Rats!”

Rats they were; for above the hollow “wash-wash, hurry-hurry, wash-wash, hurry-hurry” of the water, I could hear little splashes and a scuffling by me along the sides o' the brick-work.

You may laugh at people's hair standing on end, but I know then that there was a creeping, tingling sensation in the roots o' mine, as though sand was trickling amongst it; a cloud seemed to come over my mind, and for a few moments I believe I was mad—mad with fear; and it was only by setting my teeth hard and clenching my fists that I kept from shrieking. However, I was soon better, and ready to laugh at myself

as I recollected that I could only be a little way from the spot where the men worked; so I began to wade along with the water here about up to my middle. All at once I stopped, and thought about where I was at work.

"Which way did the water run?"

My head turned hot and my temples throbbed with the thought. If I went the wrong way I should be lost—lost in this horrible darkness—to sink, at last, into the foul, black stream, to be drowned and devoured by the rats, or else to be choked by the foul gases that must be lurking down here in these dark recesses.

Again the horror of dark darkness came upon me: I shrieked out wildly, and the cry went echoing through the sewer, sounding hollow and wild till it faded away. But once more I got the better of it, and persuaded myself that I had only cried aloud to scare the rats. What would I not have given for a stout stick as a defence against attack as I groped my way on, feeling convinced that I should be right if I crawled down stream, when a little reflection would have told me that up stream must be the right way, for I must have been borne down by the water. But I could not reflect, for my brain seemed in a state of fever, and now and then my teeth chattered as though I had the ague.

I groped on for quite a quarter of an hour, when the horrid thought came upon me that I was going wrong, and again I tried to lean up against the wall, which seemed to cause my feet to slip from under me. I felt no cold, for the perspiration dropped from me, as I frantically turned back and tried to retrace my steps, guiding myself by running a hand against the wall where every now and then it entered the mouth of a small drain, when, so sure as it did, there was a scuffle and rush, and more than once I touched the cold slippery body of a rat, a touch that made me start back as though shot.

On I went, and on, and still no scaffold, and no gleam of gaslight. Thought after thought gave fresh horror to my situation, as now I felt certain that in my frantic haste I had taken some wrong turn, or entered a branch of the main place; and at last, completely bewildered, I rushed headlong on, stumbling and falling twice over, so that I was half choked in the black water. But it had its good effect; for it put a stop to my wild struggles, which must soon have ended in my falling insensible into what was certain death. The water cooled my head, and now, feeling completely lost, knowing that I must have been nearly two hours in the sewer, I made up my mind to follow the stream to its mouth in the Thames, where, if the tide was down, I could get from the mud on to the wharf or bank.

So once more I struggled on, following the stream slowly for what seemed to be hours, till at last, raising my hand, I found I could not touch the roof; and by that knew that I was in a larger sewer, and therefore not very far from the mouth. But here there was a new terror creeping up me, so to speak, for from my waist the water now touched my chest, and soon

after my armpits; when I stopped, not daring to trust myself to swim, perhaps a mile, when I felt that weak I could not have gone a hundred yards.

I know in my disappointment I gave a howl like a wild beast, and turned again to have a hard fight to breast the rushing water, which nearly took me off my legs. But the fear of death lent me help, and I got on and on again till I felt myself in a turning which I soon knew was a smaller sewer, and from thence I reached another, where I had to stoop; but the water was shallower, not above my knees, and at last much less deep than that.

Here I knelt down to rest, and the position brought something else from my heart; and, after a while, still stooping, I went on, till, having passed dozens upon dozens of drains, I determined to creep up one, and I did.

Praps you won't think it strange as I dream and groan in bed sometimes, when I tell you what followed.

I crawled on, and on, and on, in the hopes that the place I was in would lead under one of the street gratings, and I kept staring ahead in the hopes of catching a gleam of light, till at last the place seemed so tight that I dared go no further, for fear of being fixed in. So I began to back very slowly, and then, feeling it rather hard work, stopped for a rest.

It was quite dry here, but, scuffling on in front, I kept hearing the rats I had driven before me; and now that I stopped and was quite still, half a dozen of them made a rush to get past me, and the little fight which followed even now gives me the horrors. I'd hardly room to move; but I killed one by squeezing him, when the others backed off, but not till my face was bitten and running with blood.

At last, half dead, I tried to back out, for the place seemed to stifle me; and I pushed myself back a little way, and then I was stopped, for the skirts of my jacket filled up what little space had been left, and I felt that I was wedged in, stuck fast.

Now came the horrors again worse than ever. The hot blood seemed to gush into my eyes; I felt half suffocated; and to add to my sufferings a rat, that felt itself, as it were, penned up, fastened upon my lip. It was its last bite, however, for half mad as I felt then, my teeth had closed in a moment upon the vicious beast, and it was dead.

I made one more struggle, but could not move, I was so knocked up; and then I fainted.

It must have been some time before I came to myself; but when I did, the first sound I heard was a regular tramp, tramp, of some one walking over my head, and I gave a long yell for help, when, to my great joy, the step halted, and I shrieked again, and the sweetest sound I have ever heard in my life came back. It was a voice shouting,

"Hallo!"

"Stuck fast in the drain!" I shouted with all the strength I had left; and then I swooned off once more, to wake up a week afterwards out of a brain-fever sleep in a hospital.

It seems I had got within a few yards of a grating which was an end o' the drain, and the close quarters made the rats so fierce. The policeman heard my shriek, and had listened at the grating, and then got help; but he was only laughed at, for they could get no further answer out o' me. It was then about half-past three on a summer's morning; and though the grate was got open, they were about to give it up, saying the policeman had been humbugged; when a couple o' sweeps came up, and the little un offered to go down back'ards, and he did, and came out directly after, saying that he could feel a man's head with his toes.

That policeman has had many a glass at my expense since, and I hope he'll have a many more; and when he tells me the story, which I like to hear—but always take care shall be when Polly's away—he says he knows I should have liked to see how they tore that drain up in no time. To which there's always such an echo in my heart, that it comes quite natural to say, "You're right, my boy!"

CALAMITY-MONGERING.

AMONG the curiosities which appear in the Memoir-Gallery of Horace Walpole (that incomparable teller of stories, prescient man of taste, steadfast friend of those whom he professed to befriend, and withal, that egregious coxcomb), figures the China merchant's jar, advertised as *THE ONE JAR CRACKED BY THE EARTHQUAKE*—a quaint and laughable curiosity; the description of which might justifiably be stereotyped in the first column of our great journal, as illustrating what English men and women covet, and like to see.

But that such coveting and preference do not restrict themselves to what is quaint and laughable, we have had—and, more's the pity, still have—too frequently recurring proof. When a shocking and bloodthirsty murder has been committed, what so delicious as to make acquaintance with the precise implements of the crime, or the property of the victims? Many a year ago, the practicable gig and horse belonging to the miserable gambler Weare, of Gill's Hill Cottage, murdered by Hunt, Thurtell, and Probert, were retained, to figure on the stage of one of our London theatres; and men and women had a richer relish for the murder, because the identical vehicle and beast were trotted out to excite their horror. Yet note the strange inconsistencies of our hungerers after sensation. Yellow starch—once on a time indispensable to My Lady's ruff—was done to death by its figuring round the neck of that poisoning sorceress, Mrs. Turner, of Somerset and Overbury memory, when she was decked for the scaffold. Black satin ranged at a low figure among ladies and their maids, for a long period subsequent to its selection by the precious murderess, Mrs. Manning, as the garment in which it would be most becoming for her to present herself "on the drop." (Is it

not rather extraordinary, by the way, that the great journal should lately have quoted this Chief, She-Devil of liars, as an authority on a question of fact, and should have dwelt upon her horror of a public execution, when she prepared herself for her own with a black satin dress, bran-new boots, and pink silk stockings?)

But here is a very recent announcement:

* * * the * * * Theatre, * * *.—**THIS EVENING, the GRAND PANTOMIME.** Monsieur and Madame Stertzenbach. Johnny Day, the Champion Walker (nine years old). Olmar. Mr. John King, and other Survivors from the steam-ship London, will appear on the stage. **BITTER COLD.**

One of the attractions announced (it may be stated in a parenthesis) is the gentleman who walks in theatres upside down, with his heels in rings on the roof—and who went into a court of justice, not so very long ago, to prove that he *was* "the only China jar cracked by the earthquake," and that acrobats who had traded on his name (which, by the way, did not happen to be baptismal) had done so in an illicit manner.

"Let that pass," as Goldsmith's Beau Tibbs said. But how can any honest heart let pass the exhibition of shipwrecked men, saved by God's mercy from the saddest sea-calamity which has been told since the wreck of the Royal Charter? This is no China-jar curiosity. The tale of the destruction of the London has touched every heart, has made many an eye wet, has been thought over in the watches of the night by people secure in their own nestling-places, who hold yet

Of the old sea a reverential fear,
and who cannot help, in wakeful moments, hearing the winds, and thinking of the waves, and taking part in the vicissitudes of fortune attending those who travel to and fro across the mighty waters.

It seems that the captain was a good man and true, even assuming a mistake in his seamanship;—that the passengers on board, when once the tremendous peril in which they stood was fully disclosed to them, did not belie their country or their religion, but met their doom calmly. It seems that the few people in the forlorn boat (one disabled by a hurt, a day earlier) were manly and courageous, and staunch one to the other; that there was no selfishness, no flinching, no impatience, no rapacity. Why degrade such a noble story? Why dim so bright an example? And, would not pit, boxes, and gallery, enjoy a procession of real widows, real orphans, and real bereaved relatives?

Surely the advertisement, "The wrecked men of the London," presented on a London play-bill, offers a dismal rebuke to those who are over-apt to boast of England's progress since the days of Mrs. Turner's yellow starch, and Mr. Weare's murder, and Mrs. Manning's historical black satin gown.

Since the above was penned, a yet more intolerable abuse of the topics and interests of the hour has been flaring in a play-bill. The other

day an account of a night in a Casual Ward in a workhouse made some of those "who sit at home at ease" ask whether we live in a Christian city. They have not the less reason to put the question, when they see those revelations made the excuse of "a sensation drama" with a real pauper—Kind Old Daddy—positively the genuine article, engaged expressly for the bill. In the name of pity, decency, humanity, let every right-minded person discourage and denounce exhibitions, the essential brutality of which is not redeemed by the slightest pretext of grace or beauty. We are busy, and at the time being earnest, in our resolution to come at Jamaica truths. Should we be thoughtless in overlooking sores at home, which, though some may rate them as slight, indicate deep and widely-spread inner disease?

At which theatre will the thrilling drama of *The Cattle Plague*, with a real infected cow engaged expressly for the purpose, be first produced?

WHAT WAS IT?

MANY years ago—not much less, I am concerned to say, than fourscore—it fell, in the line of professional duty, to the lot of my uncle—great-uncle, you understand—then a young officer of engineers, to visit, of all spots in the earth, the Shetland Isles. His journey, as stated in his note-book, from which this remarkable incident is taken, was connected with the intended restoration of Fort Charlotte—a work of Cromwell's day, intended for the protection of the port and town of Lerwick, but which came to considerable sorrow in the succeeding century, when a Dutch frigate, storm-stayed, devoted an autumn evening to knocking it about the ears of the half-dozen old gentlemen in infirm health who constituted the garrison.

On the evening that preceded his departure from Chatham, my uncle appears to have given a little supper of adieu, at which were present Captains Clavering and Dumpsey, Messieurs Chips, Bounce, and The Tourist.

Whether the last three gentlemen belonged to the service or not cannot be ascertained. The army-lists of that period have been searched in vain for their names, and we are driven to the conjecture that the sportiveness of intimate friendship may have reduced what was originally "Carpenter" to Chips, and supplied the other two gentlemen with titles adapted to their personal merits or peculiarities.

From my relative's memoranda of the overnight's conversation, it would seem to have taken, at times, a warning and apprehensive tone; at other times, to have been joacular, if not reckless. The wet blanket of the party was Dumpsey, whose expressions of condolence could hardly have been more solemn had my uncle been condemned to suffer at day-break, with all the agreeable formalities at that time incident to high treason!

Chips appears to have followed the lead of

Captain Dumpsey, and (if we may assign to him certain appalling incidents of the North Seas, to which my uncle has appended, as authority, "Ch.") with considerable effect. Mr. Bounce seems to have propounded more cheerful views, with especial allusion to the exciting sport his friend was likely to enjoy in those remote isles; while The Tourist has, to all appearance, limited himself to the duty of imparting to my uncle such local information as he was able to afford. In fact, so far as can be guessed, the conversation must have proceeded something in this fashion:

"Tell you what, old fellow," Dumpsey may have said, "going up to this place isn't exactly a hop across Cheapside. If there's any little matter of—of property, in which I can be serviceable as administrator, legatee, and so forth—after your—in the event of your remaining permanently within the Arctic circle—now, say so."

"Prut!—Pshaw!" probably said my uncle.

"The kraken fishery has been bad this year, they tell me," said Chips, quietly. "Otherwise, your friend might have secured a specimen or two of the bottle-nosed whale and moored them as breakwaters in the Irish Channel."

"He did nearly as well," returned the unabashed Bounce. "Bill was bobbing one day for coalfish in rather deepish water—thousand fathoms or so—when there came a tug that all but pulled his boat under. Bill took several turns round a cleat, and, holding on, made signals to his sloop for assistance. Meanwhile, his boat, towed by the thing he had hooked, set off on a little excursion to the Faro Islands; but a fresh breeze springing up, the sloop contrived to overhaul him, and secure the prize. What do you think it was? You'd never guess. A fine young sea-serpent, on his way to the firds, fresh run, and covered with sea-lice as big as Scotch muttons!"

"I should, I confess, much like to learn, from rational sources," said Captain Clavering, "whether these accounts of mysterious monsters, seen, at long intervals, in the North Seas, have any foundation of truth."

My uncle was disposed to believe they had. It was far from improbable that those wild and unfrequented sea-plains had become the final resort of those mighty specimens of animal life, which it seemed intended by their Creator should gradually disappear altogether. Indifference, the fear of ridicule and disbelief, the want of education, preventing a clear and detailed account—such, no doubt, had been among the causes tending to keep this matter in uncertainty. It was not long since that a portion of sea-serpent, cast upon the Shetland shores, had been sent to London, and submitted to the inspection of a distinguished naturalist, who (the speaker believed) pronounced it a basking shark.

My relative's voyage must have been made under auspicious circumstances, since, notwithstanding a brief detention at Aberdeen, a heavy tossing in the mis-called "roost" of Sumburgh, and a dense fog as they approached Lerwick,

the good ship dropped anchor in the last-named port on the tenth day.

There were no inns, there are none *now* in Shetland, and my uncle took lodgings in the house of Mrs. Monilees, than whom, he observes, no woman ever less deserved her name. Living must have been cheap in those days, for Mrs. Monilees boarded, lodged, and washed her guest, for eighteenpence a day, and declared she made a handsome profit of him; the only "lee" of which my uncle ever suspected her.

Fort Charlotte was not a work of any remarkable extent, and my uncle's survey and report of all the Dutch had left of her, were very soon completed. His orders being to await an answering communication, which could scarcely be expected to arrive in less than a fortnight, abundant leisure was afforded for making excursions in the neighbourhood, and he resolved that the first should be directed to the lovely bay and ruined castle of Scalloway.

It was then the custom—if it is not still—to walk out upon the moorland, catch the first pony you fancied, take him whither you would, and turn him loose when you'd done with him. Arming himself, therefore, with a bridle and pad, my uncle stepped upon the moor, and speedily captured a likely-looking sheltie that had an air of pace. The pony seemed perfectly aware what was wanted of him; and, having hastily rubbed noses with a friend—as if requesting him to mention at home that he had been pressed by an obtrusive traveller, but hoped to have done with him, and be back to supper—at once trotted off without guidance towards Scalloway.

The day was fine overhead, but certain misty wreaths—the skirts, as my uncle conjectured, of an adjacent sea-fog—kept sweeping up the valley, crystallising pilgrim and steed with a saltish fluid, and melting away into the blue.

It was on the lifting of one of these gauzy screens, that my uncle found that he had turned an angle in the road, and was within sight of the village of Scalloway, with its dismantled keep, memorial of the oppression of evil Pate Stewart, Earl of Orkney, hanged a century before, but still (as The Tourist would tell us, were he here) the Black Beast of Orkney and Shetland.

On a fine clear summer's day the coast scenery of this part is singularly beautiful. From the heights overlooking the picturesque harbour may be traced the blue outline of many of the hundred isles forming the Shetland Archipelago, while countless holms* and islets, green with velvety sward, stud the rippling waters. Far to the westward—nearly twenty miles, I think—heaves up out of the ocean depths the mighty Fughloe, now Foula, Island—Agricola's "Ultima Thule"—whose threatening bounds the most daring mariner approaches with reluctance.

As my uncle expected, a mist was hanging to seaward, and shut out all the nearer holms and

headlands. He therefore devoted the first half-hour to a visit to the castle, being accompanied in his progress by four young ladies, carrying baskets of woollen-work—the produce of island industry—of which, he was sternly informed, it was the custom of every traveller of distinction to purchase about a ton.

The mist had, by this time, cleared considerably. Not a sail of any kind was visible on the calm blue sea, but so many coasting and fishing craft lay at anchor in the roadstead, as to have all the appearance of a wind-bound fleet. Excepting when a small boat moved occasionally between ship and shore, complete inactivity appeared to prevail; and this was the more remarkable, since the herring-season was near its close, and my uncle was aware that, on the opposite—the eastern—shore, every hour of propitious weather was being turned to the best account.

Here, however, though there were many sailors and fishermen about the beach and quay—lounging, sleeping, or chatting in groups—there was clearly neither preparation, nor thought of it. What made this state of things still more unaccountable was that the bay, even to my uncle's inexperienced eye, was absolutely alive with "shoals" of herring and mackerel, clouds of sea-fowl pursuing them and feasting at their will.

The goodwives, if, having their work in their hands, they did not partake of their husbands' idleness, certainly abetted it, since it seemed as if four-fifths of them had assembled on the shore and the little quay.

Curious to elucidate the mystery, my uncle drew near to a man who had just come ashore from a herring-smack, and seemed to be its master, and, with some difficulty, for the sea-going Shetlanders are neither polished nor communicative, drew him into conversation.

Would it be possible, he presently asked, to visit Fughloe; and on what terms could a smack—the skipper's, for instance—be chartered for the purpose?

"Fughloe!" repeated the man, with a grin on his bronzed features, "why—fifty pounds."

"Fifty *what*?" shouted my uncle. "For a four hours' sail?"

"You won't get one of us for less," said the man, sullenly, and probably in a different dialect from that into which my uncle has rendered it. "And I wouldn't tempt you to try it."

"You have done so well with the cod and the herrings this season, that money's no object, I suppose?"

The man's face grew dark.

"We have done *bad*," he said; "and we're doing worse."

"With miles of fish yonder waiting to jump into your nets?"

"Waiting to do *what*? Why, sir, *they* knows it just as well as we, perhaps better," was the oracular reply.

"Know *what*?"

"Eh! don't *you* know?" said the man, turn-

* The "holm," at low tide, is connected with the main.

ing to my uncle; "so, you're a stranger. Will you come a little way along o' me?" he added, in a tone meant to be civil. My uncle assented.

Passing the remaining cottages, from one of which the skipper procured his telescope, they ascended the nearest height, until they had opened a large portion of the bay towards the west. Then the man stopped, and extended his shaggy blue arm in a direction a little to the south of the now invisible Fughloe.

"The fog's shutting in again," he said; "but you look *there*, steady. *That's what keeps us!*"

My uncle did look steadily along the blue arm and the brown finger, till they ended in fog and sea; but, in the latter—*through* the former—he fancied he could distinguish a low dark object belonging to neither, the precise nature of which was wholly indiscernible.

"Now you've got him, sir," said the man. "Take the glass."

My uncle did so; and directed a long and penetrating gaze at the mysterious object.

Twice he put down the glass, and twice—as if unsatisfied with his observation—raised it again to his eye.

"I see the—the islet—clearer now," he said, at last; "but—but——"

"I know what's a-puzzling you, sir," said the skipper. "You noticed, when we was standing below, that it was two hours' flood; and yet that little islet, as you call it, lifts higher and higher."

"True. It was little more than a-wash when I first made it out," said my uncle; "let me see if——" he put the glass to his eye. "Why, as I live, it has heaved up thirty feet at least within this minute! Can any rock——"

"There's three hundred fathom, good, between *that* rock and the bottom, sir," said the man, quietly. "It's a creature!"

"Good Heavens, man!—do you mean to tell me *that object* is a living thing?" exclaimed my uncle, aghast.

For answer, the man pointed towards it.

His fingers trembling with excitement, my uncle could not, for a moment, adjust the glass. When he did so, a further change had taken place, and the dispersing mist afforded him, for the first time, a distinct and uninterrupted view.

At a distance from the nearest point of shore, which my uncle's professional eye estimated at a league and a half, there floated, or rather wallowed, in the sea a shapeless brownish mass, of whose dimensions it was impossible to form any conception whatever; for while at times it seemed to contract to the length of perhaps a hundred feet, with a breadth of half that measure, there were moments when—if the disturbance and displacement of the water might indicate movements of the same animal—its appalling proportions must have been measured by rods, poles, and furlongs!

Through the skipper's glass, which was an excellent one, my uncle observed that its height

out of the water had diminished by nearly half; also, that clouds of sea-fowl were whirling and hovering about the weltering mass, though without, so far as he could distinguish, daring to settle upon it.

Fascinated by an object which seemed sent to rebuke his incredulity, in placing before his eyes this realisation of what had been hitherto treated as fantastic dreams, my uncle continued to gaze, rooted to the spot, until the mist, in one of its perpetual changes, shut out the object altogether, when the skipper, touching his hat, made a movement to descend.

In their way back to the village, the seaman told my uncle that, about a week before, the bay of Scalloway, and indeed all the neighbouring estuaries, had become suddenly filled with immense shoals of every description of fish, the take of herrings alone being such as to bid fair to more than compensate for the losses of the season. Three days before, while the bustle was at its height, the wind light from sou'-sou'-west, and smooth sea, a sealing-boat from Papa Stour, approaching Scalloway, had rounded Skelda Ness, and was running across the bay, when one of the crew gave notice of an extraordinary appearance, about a mile distant, on the weather bow. The next moment, a mighty globe of water, apparently many hundred yards in circuit, rose to the height of their sloop's mast, and, breaking off into huge billows, the thunder of which was heard for miles around, created a sea which, distant as was the vessel from the source of commotion, tossed her like an egg-shell.

Traditions of volcanic action are not unknown to the Shetland seamen. Imagining that a phenomenon of this kind was occurring, they at once bore up, and, having the wind free, rapidly increased their distance from the danger, while, in every direction, boats, partaking of their alarm, were seen scudding into port. The appalled seamen glanced back to seaward. The momentary storm had ceased, and the spray and mist raised by the breaking water subsiding, gave to view an enormous object rising, in a somewhat irregular form, many feet above the surface, and—unless the terror of the crew led them to exaggerate—not less than half a mile in extent.

"A rock thrown up," was their first idea. One look through the glass dispelled it. The object, whatever it might be, lived, moved, was rolling round—or, at all events, swinging—with a heavy lateral movement, like a vessel deeply laden, the outline changing every moment; while, at intervals, a mountainous wave, as if created by some gigantic "wallow," would topple over the smoother sea.

Dusk was closing in when the sealing-boat reached the quay. They had been closer to the monstrous visitor than any, except one small craft—*young Peter Magnus's*—which had had to stand out to sea, but was now seen approaching. When she arrived, nearly the whole population was assembled, and assailed her crew with eager question. Peter looked grave and

disturbed ("Tis a young fellow, I'm afeerd, without much heart," said the skipper), and seemed by no means sorry to set foot on shore.

"It's neither rock, nor wreck, nor whale, nor serpent, nor anything we know of *here*," was all that could be got from Peter, but one of his hands, who had taken a steadier look at the creature, declared that it made intelligent movements; also, that, in rolling, it displayed its flanks, which were reddish brown, and covered with bunches as big as bothies, and things like stunted trees! Pressed as to its size, he thought it might be three-quarters to a mile round, but *there was more below!*

"Not many of us fishermen turned in that night," the skipper went on to say. "We were up and down to the beach continually; for, the night being still, we could *hear* the beast, and from its surging, and a thundering noise that might be his blowing, we thought he might be shifting his berth. And so he was; for at daybreak he worked to the eastward, and has lain moored ever since where you saw. But we still hear him, and the swell he makes comes right up to our boats in the harbour. Why don't we venture out a mile or so? *This* is why. Because, if he's a quarter so big as they say—and, sir, I'm afeerd to tell you what that is—supposin' he made up his mind to go down, he'd suck down a seventy-four, if she were within a mile of him. We're losing our bread, but we must bide his pleasure, or rather, God's, that sent him," concluded the honest skipper, "come what will on it."

"There was one chance for us," he presently added. "The Sapphire, surveying ship, is expected every day, and some think the captain wouldn't mind touching him up with his caronades; but when he sees what 'tis, I don't think he'll consider it his dooty!"

They had reached the village during this conversation, and were approaching a group of persons engaged apparently in some dispute, when a young man burst out from the party, and, in a discomposed manner, was walking away. The skipper stopped him.

"Well, Peter, my lad; what's wrong *now*?"

"I think she's mad!" was Peter's doubtful answer, as he brushed back his hair impatiently from his hot, excited brow. He had handsome but effeminate features, and seemed about twenty.

The skipper spoke a word or two with him apart, patted his shoulder, as if enforcing some advice, and rejoined my uncle.

"Young Magnus, my sister's son," he said. "A sweethearts' quarrel, sir, that's all. But she *do* try him sure! Ah, Leasha, Leasha!" he continued, shaking his head at a young woman who sat at work upon the gunwale of a boat, and appeared the centre of an admiring circle of both sexes, who stood, sat, or sprawled about her, as their fancy prompted. She was very handsome, haughty-looking for her station, and, at this moment, out of humour.

Though she could not hear the skipper's exclamation, she understood the gesture that

accompanied it, and, smoothing her brow, appeared to stand on the defensive.

Young Magnus, who had returned to the circle, stepped forward.

"Now, Leasha," he said, "will you dare to say before my uncle what you did to me—yes, to me?" repeated the young man, striking his breast passionately.

The word was ill chosen. Leasha's spirit rose.

"Dare!" she said, in a suppressed voice. "You shall see," she said. "But remember, Mr. Edmonston," addressing my uncle's companion, "this has nothing to do with such as *you*." I said that, among Scalloway men, we had both children and cowards. I said that, because a wrecked hull, or a raft of Norway timber, or at worst a helpless dying monster of some sort is floating on our shores, we are not ashamed to skulk and starve in port. Not a boat will put out to take up the fish within half a mile of this beach"—she stamped her bare and sinewy but well-formed foot upon it—"nor even venture near enough to discover what it is that has scared away your courage and reason. Shame on all such, I say, and shame again."

"You don't know what you are talking of, Leasha," said Edmonston. "We do. If there were not danger, I should not be *here*. I might be willing to risk my life, but not my ship, which, while God spares her, must be my son's and grandson's bread. You speak at random, girl, and Peter Magnus is no more to blame than the rest of us; less, perhaps," said the good-natured skipper, "for his boat is but a little thing. A 'wreck,' child? Who ever saw a rig with *nine masts*? 'Norway rafts?' Psha! Call it a sea-thing, you're nearer to the truth; but he's a bold seaman, and a precious fool to boot, that puts his craft near enough to ask whence he hails."

"I would do it if I were a man," cried the girl, beating her foot upon the ground. "And—and I will not say what I should think of the bold man that did it *now*."

Young Magnus coloured to the temples, for the challenge was directed to him, but made no reply. There had stood, meanwhile, a little aloof from the group, a young fisherman, tall, athletic, and with a countenance that would have been handsome but for a depression of the nose, the result of an injury, and for a somewhat sullen and sinister expression, which was perhaps habitual to him. The words had not left Leasha's lips before he uncoiled his arms, which had been folded on his broad chest, and strode into the circle, saying, quietly,

"I will go."

"You'll not be such a fool, Gilbert Sincler (Sinclair)," said Edmonston.

"You'll see," said the other, in his short, sullen manner. "Some of you boys shove her off," pointing to his boat, "while I run up yonder."

He went to a cottage close at hand, and was back almost instantly, carrying something under his fishing-cape, and a gun. His boat was

already in the water, and fifty dexterous hands busied in stepping the mast, setting the sails, and stowing the shingle-ballast. She was ready.

"Who's going with you, since you *will* go?" growled Edmonston.

"I've only room for one man living," said Sinclair, in his sinister way. "Now, I don't want to take advantage over Peter Magnus. Him, or none."

The young man stood irresolute for a moment, then, with one glance at Leasha, leaped into the boat. Sinclair pushed off, eagerly.

"You have done well, girl," said Edmonston, sternly. "If either return alive, it will not be Peter Magnus."

"What—what do you mean?" exclaimed the girl, clutching his sleeve as he turned away.

"That Gilbert Sinclair is a treacherous, malignant devil, and at this moment mad with jealous—Stop—"

But Leasha had dashed down the beach.

"Peter! Peter!" she shrieked, "come back! For the love of Heaven—back! I must speak with you!"

"Too late!" replied Sinclair, with a grin. "Wait till he brings you what you want to know."

As the last word was uttered there was a splash astern. Magnus had leaped into the water.

"Ha! ha! Coward!" roared Sinclair, as his boat shot into the fog.

Evening was now approaching, and my uncle, deeply interested, and resolved to see the adventure out, accepted the skipper's invitation to pass the night at his cottage. After taking some refreshment, they strolled out again upon the shore and quay. The mist was clearing, and the moon had risen. My uncle asked what his host imagined Sinclair proposed to do, expressing his doubts whether he intended anything but bravado.

Edmonston was not so sure of that. Ruffian as he was, with a spice of malice that made him the terror and aversion of the village, Sinclair was a perfect dare-devil in personal courage, and, his blood being now up, he was certain, if he returned at all, to bring back tidings of some description. The man's unlucky passion for Leasha (who was betrothed, Edmonston said, to his nephew) had been the cause of much uneasiness to the friends of both. "God pardon me if I misjudge the man," concluded Edmonston; "but if ever murder looked out of man's eye, it did from his when Peter jumped into his boat to-day."

By eleven o'clock the haze had lifted so much that the skipper proposed to ascend the height, and try if anything could be seen. The night was still as death; and, as they rose the hill, the soft rippling murmur of the sea barely reached their ears.

"I never knew him so quiet as *this*," remarked Edmonston; "I take it, he's—"

Before he could finish, a sound, compounded of rush and roar, so fearful and appalling that

it can be likened to nothing but the sudden bursting of a dam which confined a pent-up sea, swooped from seaward, and seemed to shake the very rock on which they stood. There was a bellow of cavernous thunder, which seemed to reverberate through the distant isles; and, far out, a broad white curtain appeared to rise, blend with the dispersing fog, and move majestically towards the land.

"It's the surf! He has sounded," whispered Edmonston. "Listen—now!"

Perfect silence had succeeded the tumultuous roar, and again they heard nothing but the sough of the sea lapping the crags below. But, after the lapse of perhaps a minute, the hush was invaded by a soft sibilant murmur, increasing to a mighty roar; and, with a crash like thunder, a billow—fifteen feet in height—fell headlong upon the rocky shore. It was followed by two or three more, each smaller than the preceding; and once again silence resumed her sway.

At daybreak it was seen that the terrible Sentinel of Scalloway had returned to his fathomless depths.

And where was Sinclair? He was seen no more; but, weeks afterwards, a home-bound boat, passing near the spot where the monster had lain, nearly came in contact with some floating wreck. From certain singular appearances, some of which seemed to indicate that the wreck had been but recently released from the bottom, the crew were induced to take it in tow, and bring it into port. There it was at once identified as the forward portion of Gilbert Sinclair's boat, torn—or as Scalloway men insist to this day, *bitten*—clean off, just forward of the mast; the grooves of one colossal tooth—the size of a tree—being distinctly visible!

There are persons, it is true, who have endeavoured to lessen the mysterious interest of my uncle's story, by suggesting a different explanation; hinting, for example, that the object might have been composed of nothing more extraordinary than the entangled hulls of two large vessels, wrecked in collision; and that Sinclair, suspecting this, and endeavouring to reduce them to manageable proportions through the agency of gunpowder, had destroyed himself with them.

But, if so, where were the portions of wreck? We have also the support of no less a person than the author of *Waverley*, who, in his notes to the *Pirate*, mentions the incident, and its effect upon the hardy seamen of Scalloway; while my uncle himself, at a subsequent visit to that port, smoked a pipe with Mr. Magnus in the very boat—then converted into an arbour—that had been bitten in two by the sea-monster. So that, with him, I frankly ask—if it was not a kraken—*What was it?*

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